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HISTORY OF JEWS AT OBERLIN COLLEGE:

A MIRROR OF CHANGE

Andrea R. Meyer

Independent Research, 1988-1989

Oberlin College

HISTORY OF JEWS AT OBERLIN

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INTRODUCTION

In the Fall 1987 I took a research class at Oberlin on the history of women. We were assigned to research the life of a woman and I decided to see if it was feasible to research the history of a Jewish Oberlin graduate, possibly one of the first to attend Oberlin. A year and a half later I still don't know who the first Jewish student was to attend Oberlin. However, I did discover, and subsequently research the life of, 1920 graduate Marion Benjamin Roth who started the Oberlin branch of the Menorah Society, a Jewish literary and cultural group.

Mrs. Roth, whom I interviewed, started the group because she was concerned about the environment for Jewish students. In letters to her Rabbi in Cleveland she discussed her perceptions of life for Jewish students at Oberlin soon after her arrival.

> Rabbi Wolsey, there are quite a few Jewish students here. Some of them however, prefer to keep their religion under cover. I don't know why they should because the Jewish students have all the privileges allotted to others. There is nothing they can be barred from so far as I know. Can you imagine why they should feel as they do?[1]

Marion Benjamin later reflected that Jewish students needed to have "some place that they could get together if they wanted; to discuss problems, if they had any, and to be together for a holiday."[2]

> The only thing that irked me was that we had to go to chapel everyday . . . and always it was more or less religious and yet

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[1]Marion Benjamin to Rabbi Louis Wolsey, March 29, 1916, "Oberlin File" in "Rabbi Louis Wolsey Papers" Box 5, Folder 6, Oberlin College Archives (OCA). Original, Anshe Chesed Congregation Records, Rabbi Wolsey papers, Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS).

[2]Mrs. Marion Benjamin Roth, interview by author, tape recording, Youngstown, Ohio, 6 December 1987.

there was nothing, ever, for any of the Jewish students that would make them feel that they were impartial. . . . This was a congregational college and they had the seminary there which was training people for the ministry so I can understand it. But I did feel that some recognition should be given to the fact that there was another religion. And that's why I went to the office and asked them whether or not it would be possible to ask my Rabbi to come and speak here.[3]

Eventually Rabbi Wolsey spoke at Oberlin. More importantly, Marion Benjamin proposed starting an Oberlin branch of the Menorah Society.[4] In April 1918 the college faculty voted its approval for the formation of the "Menorah Association."[5] Unfortunately, the Oberlin branch didn't last much beyond 1920 when Marion Benjamin graduated.

Throughout my research on Mrs. Roth, the question of the history of Jewish students at Oberlin kept surfacing. The concerns she raised about the situation for Jewish students at Oberlin piqued my interest and I submitted a proposal to do an independent research project on the topic. My proposal was approved and in the beginning of 1988 I began researching the history of Jews at Oberlin.

I was a bit apprehensive at first; what if I couldn't find any material on Jewish students? This fear did not materialize, although locating information on Jewish students was not always easy.

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[3]Ibid.

[4]The Menorah Society "is a branch of an Intercollegiate Society whose total membership consists of some thirty-five hundred Jewish young men and women devoted to the study of Jewish thought and ideas." The Effort, Vol. 3, No. 1, (December 1914): 20. Anshe Chesed Congregation Records, WRHS. The Children's Effort was founded in March 1913 by the religious school students at the Euclid Avenue Temple (later renamed Anshe Chesed). In December 1914 the magazine was renamed The Effort and included articles and information geared to the adult membership of the Temple.

[5]"College Faculty Minutes April 16, 1918" in Office of the Secretary, Box 170, OCA. The Oberlin branch was open to all member of the Oberlin College community.

Fortunately among the holdings in the College Archives there were two folders marked "Jewish students 1929-1951" in the records of the Office of the Secretary. These two folders proved to be a rich source of information. Among the interesting documents found therein (which I will discuss in greater length in my paper) were handwritten and typed lists of Jewish students, done for each year, from 1929 to 1951. All of a sudden an entirely unexpected door opened for me; I could go beyond the institution's records and reach out to the very people about whose experiences I wanted to write.

With the help of Professor Karen Sutton-Simon I put together a four page questionnaire and mailed it to 390 alumni in June 1988 (see Appendix 4 "Questionnaire: Your Jewish Experiences at Oberlin"). These were alumni for whom the Alumni Office had current addresses. I mailed the major bulk of the questionnaires on a Saturday and by the following Thursday I had received the first completed questionnaire. In the weeks following, the returns poured in.

With 241 questionnaires I realized I had collected an enormous amount of data which I could no longer assimilate by simply reading each questionnaire. With the assistance of an expert I created a database and entered the data I had accumulated. Part of the process has been the learn-as-you-go method. This has proved both exciting and frustrating. The responses from the respondents sometimes made me wish I had asked additional questions or asked questions differently.

In addition to the Jewish names from the Secretary's file I also discovered in the College Archives cards originally kept by the

registrar's office on every student who ever attended Oberlin. For the most part these 3 x 5 cards listed the student's name, permanent address, school address, and dates of attendance. However, I noticed that "Jewish" was penciled in on some of the cards while others noted different denominations. The time span covered by these marked cards was roughly between 1950s and 1960s. I have no way of knowing whether all the cards were marked with religion during this time period. I selected 63 names with "Jewish" and sent these people the same questionnaire as those from the Secretary's list. Their years of attendance ranged from 1952 to 1968. I received 45 questionnaires, a 71.4% return rate. There was no data available, as there had been for the earlier group, which would enable me to calculate the percentage this population represented during this time period; my hunch is that it is a rather small percentage so I will focus more on the experiences of the 1929 to 1951 population.

Using the institutional documentation I found in the archives and the extensive material from the respondents, I intend to show in this paper the uniqueness and particularities of Oberlin College in its treatment of Jewish students and their experience of the College during the early and mid-twentieth Century. My intention is not to compare Oberlin to other institutions, nor do I plan to resolve all the issues raised from the institutional material or from the respondents' comments. Rather, I want to look at the institution's history as it relates to its Jewish students, and then discuss at greater length the vast array of experiences which Jewish students had at Oberlin.

For the purpose of understanding and better utilizing the overall information compiled I have separated the respondents into

four groups. Group A covers the years 1927-1939;[6] Group B, 1940-1945; Group C, 1946-1951; and Group D, 1952-68. Further, I calculated the percentage that the respondents in Groups A, B and C represented out of the actual number of Jewish students attending at that time (see Appendix 5 for a detailed explanation at how I arrived at the numbers). For Group A, 1927-1939, there were approximately 106 Jews attending Oberlin and 45 respondents to the questionnaire, representing 42.4% of the Jewish population. For Group B, 1940-1945, there were approximately 177 Jews and 89 respondents representing 50.2%. For Group C, 1946-1951, there were 191 Jews and 92 respondents representing 48.1%. In total, from 1927 to 1951, approximately 474 Jews attended Oberlin and 226 respondents represent 47.6% of Oberlin's Jewish population.

The paper is divided into eleven section. To put the experiences of Jewish students at Oberlin in some perspective I will first highlight American Jewish history since the turn of the century, focusing particularly on Jews and education. The rest of the paper will focus on Oberlin. In section two I will examine Oberlin's religious foundation, particularly the general aims of the college since its inception, and in section three I will look at the institutional material on application and admission trends.[7] This material is fascinating as it shows the transformation of a small liberal arts

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[6]Although the Secretary's lists began in 1929, one of the respondents enrolled in 1927 and I shall use the enrollment years as the basis for dividing the population.

[7]The later material was literally kept in a box under a work table in the back work room in the Office of Admissions. There was no particular order or continuity to the folders I located and some of the material may have been discarded earlier. I was given permission to look through the boxes and I found a number of interesting documents which I will discuss later.

school at the turn of the century, where nearly all applicants were admitted, to a competitive school in the 1930s, grappling with increasing number of applicants. In the fourth and fifth sections, I will look at how admissions related to and affected Jewish students and address the issue of a quota. Because one of the major factors affecting Jewish experiences in higher education in this country during most of the twentieth century was the issue of admission quotas, I will discuss the respondents' perceptions to the specific question of whether or not they thought Oberlin had a Jewish quota. In sections six through ten I will discuss the general trends which the respondents reported and then examine their experiences in five chronological time periods, divided into Group A through D. At the end I will attempt to draw together all this information. It is important to note that all references made to respondents will be on an anonymous basis. Instead of citing names I have given each respondent a number which I will use in the footnotes.

SECTION 1
JEWISH AMERICAN EDUCATION -- AN OVERVIEW

Beginning in the 1880s Jews immigrated to the United States in increasing numbers to flee persecution in Eastern European countries. These were not the first Jewish immigrants to the U.S. but they did constitute by far the largest number. Prior to this time American Jews represented approximately six-tenths of one percent of the population; their numbers were small and their presence nearly undetected. As Nathan Glazer commented, "before 1880 or 1890 there were too few American Jews for them to constitute a

question."[8] This did not preclude the existence of an undercurrent of anti-Semitism. According to Stephen Steinberg, "Beneath the surface of religious harmony was a layer of anti-Semitic beliefs and stereotypes handed down from the past."[9]

By 1924 when U.S. immigration quotas were imposed the Jewish population had risen in a 35 year period from roughly a quarter of a million to nearly four million. As the visibility of Jews increased, particularly in urban centers of the Northeast where the majority settled, so did the rise in xenophobia and nativism. For the first time, Americans considered Jews a "problem."

> The essence of the "Jewish problem" was how to control the influx of Jews into areas of social activity that were predominantly Protestant. By 1920 a pattern of anti-Jewish discrimination had become established, and was being sustained by an upsurge of anti-Jewish propaganda, especially in the Northeast where the Jewish settlements were located. . . . The Eastern colleges -- elitist, tradition-bound, repositories of Puritan values and upper-class standards -- could not remain untouched by these trends, especially when their enrollments contained increasing numbers of Jewish students.[10]

Part of this backlash against Jews, particularly in the area of education, was because Jewish immigrants placed a higher value on education than did most other immigrant groups. Jews began entering institutions of higher learning in a larger percentage than they represented in the population.

> From a historical perspective it makes little sense to explain Jewish academic success in terms of a special aptitude or

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[8]Stephen Steinberg, "How Jewish Quotas Began," Commentary, 52 (Sept. 1971): 68.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

> brilliance on the part of Jews. It was enough that Jews placed high value on education, that they were more often willing to undergo sacrifices, and that their children had the motivation and perseverance to stay in school when most of their contemporaries had liberated themselves from academic routine and discipline.[11]

Americans simply did not place much emphasis on higher learning at this time. At the beginning twentieth century most employment -- even white collar -- didn't require a college or even a high school diploma. Education was reserved for those in the wealthy class who could afford to postpone working. For Jews, college education was not a mark of status but the means to escape the lower class.[12]

From 1890 to 1925 college enrollment experienced unprecedented expansion as the battle to move the curriculum beyond study of the classics to a more practical education gained momentum. This demand gave students the opportunity, for the first time, to train in fields such as business, engineering, scientific farming, the arts and new professions such as accounting and pharmacy.[13]

The conception of college in the 1920s was hotly debated and a number of articles appeared during this time. As one writer from the The Outlook stated,

> No college is open to all comers. No college ought to be. No college can pretend to any standing unless it requires of those who seek admission the proof of their worth. . . . Each student in an American college is there, or is supposed to be there, for

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[11]Ibid., 69.
[12]Ibid., 69-70.
[13]Ibid., 69.

> some other purpose than acquiring knowledge. He is to be the transmitter to others of ideals of mind, spirit, and conduct.[14]

The author continued, charging that too many students, particularly from large population centers, had entered universities although they were not fitted to carry out the ideals which the universities must maintain. He concluded that action was both necessary and appropriate, particularly against Jewish students.

> There are many thousands of alien spirits in the bodies of native-born youth. Some of them are of native parentage; naturally, many more of them are of foreign parentage. In those youth, however, there is often an eagerness for learning that drives them into the universities. . . . In particular, among these alien youths--alien in spirit, but not in body--are many who have their origin in eastern Europe, a majority of whom are Jews. The fact that in their endeavor to maintain their standards the wholesome discrimination exercised by college authorities may exclude a very large proportion of these particular aliens ought not to be regarded as a reflection upon the colleges; it ought to be understood as a natural and inevitable consequence of the immigrant tide.[15]

According to Steinberg, Jewish students threatened the status-quo in a number of ways. First, often they were from the lower class and did not exhibit the "characteristics" of the Protestant upper-class; second, they vigorously pursued academic study, threatening the traditional emphasis on social rather than academic standards; and third, their very presence as "Jews" jeopardized the standing of the institution.[16] Consequently, as early as the 1910s there was pressure at some Eastern institutions to control the numbers of Jews enrolled.

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[14]The Outlook, 131 (July 5, 1922): 406.
[15]Ibid., 407
[16]Steinberg, 70.

By 1920 some institutions previously open to Jewish students adopted quotas limiting the number accepted.

Most of these institutions quietly implemented new guidelines and procedures which did not, on the surface, give the appearance of establishing restrictions on Jewish enrollment. Some colleges set up alumni committees to screen candidates, passing on the duty of religious screening to agreeable alumni. Others employed waiting lists that permitted biased selection, and others, under the pretext of seeking a regional balance, gave priority to students outside of the East, ostensibly limiting the number of Jewish students who lived predominantly in the East.[17]

The most common method employed was the introduction of character tests and psychological exams.

> [S]chool principals were asked to rank students on such characteristics as "fair play," "public spirit," "interest in fellows," and "leadership." These traits were exactly the opposite of those generally ascribed to Jews. According to the prevailing image, Jews did not use "fair play" but employed unfair methods to get ahead. "Public spirit" and "interest in fellows" were Christian values; Jews were outsiders who cared only for themselves. "Leadership" was seen as a prerogative of non-Jews; Jews exhibiting this quality would be regarded as "pushy." School principals, who were invariably Protestant and middle class, could be expected to reflect these stereotypes in evaluating their Jewish students.[18]

By 1930 such restrictions appear to have been implemented by most Eastern private colleges which had large or growing Jewish enrollment. After Columbia University implemented a Jewish quota, its population of Jewish students dropped from 40% in 1921 to 22%

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[17]Ibid., 72.
[18]Ibid.

in 1923. Harvard, in 1922, took a different route publicly declaring its policy to limit Jewish enrollment. Harvard President A. Lawrence Lowell argued that a quota would be *beneficial* to Jewish students by reducing the level of anti-Semitism at the University. "The anti-Semitic feeling among the students is increasing, and it grows in proportion to the increase in the number of Jews."[19] His solution was to limit the number of Jews thereby limiting the level of anti-Semitism. President Lowell's plan was met with outrage, probably because although many concurred with him, people felt such a policy should not be advertised; the College's Board of Overseers announced that no changes in the requirements would be implemented.

Beyond the belief that quotas helped Jews, additional arguments were made in favor of a Jewish quota. Some maintained that if there were no quota system some colleges would be swamped with Jewish students. However, a counter argument was made that if all colleges dropped discriminatory barriers Jewish students, like other minorities, would easily be absorbed into the national collegiate body. It was also asserted that quotas equaling the percentage any minority group represented in the general population were both logical and just, even though this violated the concept that every American should be judged solely on her or his merits rather than by a group or category. Finally, an argument was made that although geographical quotas may disproportionately affect Jewish students from the Northeast, they were necessary for the college to maintain diversity and national standing. This might have been

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[19]Ibid., 73, quoting Lowell.

acceptable in theory but in practice it had been used as a subterfuge to discriminate against minority groups.[20]

The existence of a Jewish quota in higher education continued throughout the 1940s. A rather exhaustive study called "Factors Affecting the Admission of High School Seniors to College" was conducted in the late 1940s by the Elmo Roper organization. Designed to determine what characteristics or combination of characteristics were used to make a high school graduate either admissible or inadmissible to colleges, the survey found that Jewish students were less likely to be accepted to colleges than either Protestants or Catholics. The researchers examined the data under a variety of classifications including analysis based only on applicants from the Northeast. Out of 31 instances where classification showed significant differences between religious groups, 29 instances showed Jews in a less favorable position than any other religious group.[21]

In 1949 a meeting took place in Chicago under the auspices of the American Council on Education and the Anti-Defamation League. Over 100 of the country's leading educators, including many university presidents, deans and admission officers, met to address the question of discrimination in higher education. "After three days of deliberation, members of the Conference concluded that discrimination in higher education on the basis of race, religion, or national origin, [was] completely incompatible with democratic

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[20]Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, "Barriers in Higher Education" chapter in Barriers: Patterns of Discrimination Against Jews, edited by Nathan C. Belth in association with Harold Braverman and Morton Puner, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (New York, 1958): 66-67.

[21]Ibid., 61-65.

principles" and they proposed a program to eliminate such discrimination.[22] This meeting was the incentive for many other conferences held around the country from 1950 to 1951 which addressed the issue of discrimination in education.

By 1957 over seven hundred colleges in 21 states had removed one or more of the questions pertaining to race, creed, color or national origin from admission application forms. In addition, Jewish enrollment increased in Ivy League colleges throughout the 1950s. Epstein and Forster attributed part of this increase to anti-discrimination legislation, heightened awareness in the academic community that discrimination ran counter to the basic principles of education, and the overall decline in enrollment as, among other things, the GI Bill benefits ran out. However, they cautioned that enrollment would increase in the next decade and universities might once again resort to "hidden requirements" including discrimination based on race and religion.[23]

SECTION 2
RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION OF OBERLIN COLLEGE

"It should never be forgotten that Oberlin was first and foremost a religious school"[24] said Oberlin College president, Charles Grandison Finney, to the 1851 graduating class at commencement:

> You are not only educated, but educated in *God's College*--a College reared under God, and for God, by the faith, the

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[22]Ibid., 71.

[23]Ibid., 72-73.

[24]Robert S. Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College From its Foundation through the Civil War, Vol 1, (Chicago, Illinois and Crawfordsville, Indiana: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1943), 208.

> prayers, the toils and the sacrifices of God's people. You cannot but know that it has been the sole purpose of the founders and patrons of this College to educate here men and women *for God and for God's cause.*[25]

Earlier, in 1846, an attempt was made by some faculty members ". . . 'to make Oberlin a literary institution at the sacrifice of its religious character.'"[26] President Finney responded by asserting his vision of Oberlin:

> "I have no hope for Oberlin if their zeal for the conversion of souls & the sanctification of believers abates & subsides. It matters not at all to me how much of money or of students or of any thing else they have. The more of these things the worse if the leaders fail to be intently aggressive in the direction of *spiritual progress.* . . . What is to be done to hold the college to the point for which it was established?"[27]

In a 1896 Board of Trustee's meeting, the college adopted a paragraph discussing the "Purpose of Oberlin:"

> In the reorganization of Oberlin College, the original purpose of the founders of this institution is recognized and re-affirmed, namely - That this shall be a distinctively Christian Institution which aims to furnish the best attainable intellectual and moral training in all its Departments. To this end it seeks for its Professors and Instructors, persons of high scholastic attainments and of positive Christian character, capable of inspiring Christian principle and developing Christian character in their students, persons in touch with the life of the world, and urgent to apply the Christian as distinguished from the materialistic philosophy to the living problems of their generation.[28]

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[25]Ibid., quoting from *Oberlin Evangelist,* Sept. 10, 1851.

[26]Ibid., 209, quoting Lewis Tappan to C.G. Finney, Mar. 31, 1946 (Tappan Letter Books).

[27]Ibid., quoting C. G. Finney to Henry Cowles, Feb. 15, 1859 (Cowles MSS).

[28]"Evolution of the Catalog Paragraph on Religious Life, [1952-53]" in folder "Religious Interest Committee II, 1907-1968," Office of the Secretary, Box 151, OCA.

A historical statement about religious organization at Oberlin acknowledged that nothing had been more prominent in Oberlin's history than its "religious center, from which all other features of education have been, as it were, centrifugal by-products."[29] Two of the ways this was visible were through the requirement of Bible study and other texts dealing with the philosophy and application of Christian Principles as well as compulsory chapel service.[30]

Well into the twentieth century chapel was a central part of an Oberlin education. Prior to 1934, all students were required to attend "daily" chapel services (actually four times a week) and monthly chapel lectures. Student monitors took daily attendance and if a student's unexcused absences went beyond six, one hour of credit was deducted. In 1930 rather than all four services being devotional, it was decided that two of the services would be devotional and the other two would be more in the nature of assemblies.[31]

Between 1934 and 1943, the regulations stated: "[R]egular attendance at assembly and chapel is required of all undergraduates, except those who are excused by the Dean of Men or the Dean of [W]omen."[32] The excuses from chapel included adherence to a religion or branch of religion other than Protestant Christianity, opposition to religion, or "maintenance of the position that under the

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[29]"Religious Organizations at Oberlin," in folder "Religious Interest Committee II, 1907-1968," Office of the Secretary, Box 151, OCA.

[30]Ibid.

[31]"Chapel [10/8/30]" in folder "Chapel 1928-50," Papers of President William Stevenson, Box 16, OCA.

[32]"Chapel Attendance Regulations," in folder "Chapel 1928-50" Papers of President William Stevenson, Box 16, OCA.

new conditions the request to join in the service tend[ed] to develop in one's self a hostility to religion"[33] Interestingly, virtually none of the respondents to my questionnaire mentioned that they knew they could be excused; it is difficult to know whether it might have been because students felt uncomfortable or were discouraged from taking advantage of this policy.

The results of a 1933 survey, conducted to determine opinion towards chapel attendance, showed that although the general attitude among the students was favorable, almost one-third were either neutral on the subject or considered it in an unfavorable light. A majority of the students (55.2%) wanted chapel to be voluntary while the majority of both faculty and alumni polled believed chapel should be required. Among the upperclass students there was strong support for voluntary chapel, while the underclass preferred required. A comparison with a 1929 survey showed that in a period of four years favorable sentiment towards requiring chapel had already begun to dramatically lessen.[34] After 1943, students were required to attend the weekly assembly but attendance at religious chapel became voluntary.

Interestingly, the respondents well into the 1950s cited chapel as part of their Oberlin experience. There could be a number of explanations. They may have felt compelled to attend because there was little encouragement to do otherwise; they may have desired to fit in; or after 1943 they may have actually not attended chapel but

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[33]"Recommendations of the Committee on Chapel Service, January 30, 1934" in folder "Religion and Chapel, 1934," Office of the Secretary, Box 95, OCA.
[34]Ibid.

required assembly (which also may have still been called "chapel") with its occasional religious undertone.

By January 1930 the Oberlin College Bulletin included a new statement of the "Aims" of the College. These aims, although including the goal of developing the students' moral and religious life, now emphasized a rather broad liberal arts training and education. By no means had Oberlin lost its Christian emphasis, although Finney's concept of an Oberlin education had certainly expanded beyond a purely religious orientation. Oberlin continued well into the twentieth century to maintain its Christian atmosphere. For Jewish students this did not always produce an inclusive environment nor even one which recognized the existence and needs of Jewish students.

SECTION 3
HISTORY OF ADMISSIONS & APPLICATION AT OBERLIN

When College Secretary George Jones first chaired the Committee on Admissions in 1899 half of the freshman class of 150 came from Oberlin Academy and most, if not all, applicants were accepted. Although it was still unusual to attend college, immediately after World War I schools such as Oberlin faced increasing enrollment numbers and could no longer accept everyone who applied. In the September 4, 1913 Committee on Admission meeting the members discussed a new problem: unless some action were taken the school would have 50 more students enrolled than it desired. The College implemented new rules governing admission

procedures and determined that students from the lowest third of their high school class would be rejected.[35]

It was still possible under this plan for admission places to be promised a few years in advance. High scholarship and personal qualifications were less important than the priority of the application and by the early 1920s it became necessary to make application at least a year and a half in advance to be guaranteed a place.[36]

In May of 1922 the Committee on Admissions met to discuss a new plan for admissions recently adopted by Dartmouth College, dubbed the "Dartmouth Plan." Included in this plan were: 1) recognition of exceptionally high scholarship, 2) consideration of qualifications other than scholarship to be secured by a personal ratings blank, 3) selection with reference to professional and occupational distribution of fathers, 4) selection according to geographical distribution, 5) admission of all properly qualified children of alumni, and 6) priority of application in each group among candidates of like attainment.[37]

The College Faculty voted to accept some aspects of the Dartmouth plan. Effective September 1923 the Committee on Admission lessened the importance of priority of application and placed more emphasis on high scholarship and personal

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[35]"Meeting of the Committee on Admission, Thursday, September 4, 1913" in folder, "Committee on Admission Minutes, July 1907-April 1928," Office of the Secretary, Box 58, OCA.

[36]Committee on Admissions, Report from, Annual Report of the President and the Treasurer of Oberlin College for 1922-23, (Oberlin, 1924): 61, OCA.

[37]"Meeting of the Committee on Admission, Friday, April 28, 1922" in folder, "Committee on Admission Minutes, July 1907-April 1928," Office of the Secretary, Box 58, OCA.

qualifications of the applicant. In addition, preferential treatment was given to properly qualified children of alumni and, to a lesser degree, properly qualified brothers and sisters of alumni and present students.[38]

This change in admissions necessitated a change in the application materials. New forms were required, including one for "Personal Estimate" to be completed by the high school principal or superintendent. Also under this plan, revised application deadlines were made and the College declared its intentions to announce admissions' decisions on April first.[39]

Another growing problem addressed in the same report was the lack of male applicants. In 1917 the Committee on Admissions found itself voting to accept more women in view of the shortage of men.[40] By 1922 it became necessary to accept all male applicants who ranked the highest third or in the middle third of their high school class if the recommendations were satisfactory.[41]

Finally, because of the growing number of applicants, a point system was established in 1922 to rank all candidates. A maximum of 100 points was assigned on the basis of scholarship and a maximum of 50 points was established for personal qualifications, other than scholarship, mentioned in the personal evaluation forms.[42]

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[38]"Meeting of the College Faculty, May 2, 1922" in folder, "Admissions & Rel. to Secondary Schools 1913-1960," Office of the Secretary, Box 150, OCA.

[39]Annual Report of the President. . .for 1922-23, 61, OCA.

[40]"['L'] listings, Limitations of Numbers" in folder, "Committee on Admission Minutes, July 1907-April 1928," Office of the Secretary, Box 58, OCA.

[41]Annual Report of the President. . . for 1922-23, 64, OCA. Throughout the twentieth century the College had far fewer male applicants than female applicants.

[42]Ibid., 65.

This appears to be the first time an articulated and methodical system was implemented in making admission decisions.

Priority, though, was still given to the earlier applicant and to "special cases." In a 1925 Committee on Admission meeting, it was noted that the first students who applied scoring between 110-150 points (an accumulative of the above-mentioned new scoring system) were to be admitted. At that meeting admissions for "special cases" included 5 under the old plan, 8 daughters of alumni, 12 sisters of present or graduated students, 10 "girls" (sic) from Oberlin and 1 from a missionary family. Thus, out of 189 promises of admissions, over 20% were "special cases." Men, still in short number, were admitted solely on the criteria of class ranking.[43]

In 1927-28 the admission's policy was once again revised. The importance of the priority of application was lessened while the importance of high scholarship and personal qualifications was increased. At the time the College reported that

> A concession made to the alumni of the College is that their children will be admitted . . . if their applications are on file and their credentials properly submitted on time. . . . This means that such students, if they meet the admission requirements, will be admitted in preference to other applicants who rank higher in scholarship and personal qualifications, provided their own rank is high enough to make it seem likely that they can do college work successfully.[44]

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[43]"Memorandum of Committee on Admission, Meeting Held 11:00 A. M., Thursday, April 10, 1925" in folder, "Committee on Admission Minutes, July 1907-April 1928," Office of the Secretary, Box 58, OCA.

[44]The Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Report from, Annual Reports of the President and the Treasurer of Oberlin College for 1927-28 (Oberlin, 1928): 177, OCA.

At the same time the policy was revised it was necessary to change the application itself; the Admissions Office wanted a better way to discern between applicants. The following changes were reported:

> . . . [F]irst, questions designed to call out much fuller information as to the family background of the applicant, his interest outside of the classroom, his financial limitations, his reasons for deciding to go to college, and in particular to Oberlin College, and, second, space for the applicant to write an account of his life in two hundred words.[45]

Into the 1940s, before and after World War II, the central consideration for the Admissions Office was determining the size of the entering class and attempting to equalize the number of men to women. Certainly World War II contributed to the problem of fewer male applicants but even after the war there were still fewer men than women applying. In 1949, Director of Admission Robert L. Jackson stated: "with regard to men the question is to decide which ones we feel certain can do the work. In the case of girls [sic] we must select out of 400 to 500 the 180 who are best qualified."[46]

In 1948, led by the Interracial Committee composed of students, a debate ensued about the merits of four questions on the admission application form. The focus was on the request for a student's picture, place of birth, mother's maiden name, and religious preference. This debate raised issues of particular concern to Jews (to be discussed at length later). After more than a year, a change

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[45]Ibid.

[46]"[Minutes of The] Admissions Committee Meeting, Monday, November 28, 1949," 2, Oberlin College Office of Admissions (OCOA).

was made and all but the picture were removed from the application form.[47]

Following World War II, college attendance across the country increased. Oberlin was no exception and the debate on the criteria to be used in selecting the class continued.[48] Much of the focus was on determining priority. Returning veterans were given top priority. A May 1 application deadline was set for men while a March 1 deadline was set for women. With the increasing number of applications, Oberlin placed tighter restrictions on the criteria used for admitting alumni children. In general the criteria used covered four areas:

1) Academic record (including consideration of the quality of the secondary school concerned).

2) Character - as revealed in the recommendations of teachers, alumni and others.

3) Aptitude - as registered in the College Entrance Board Scholastic Aptitude Test now required.

4) Citizenship - as indicated by participation in meaningful activities in secondary school.[49]

In a 1960 trustee meeting a discussion followed a presentation by the Director of Admissions regarding statistics maintained by the College on specific groups. "Jewish students [are] probably on the increase, but it is difficult to tell because of omission since 1949 of

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[47]The change, however, didn't take place until the 1951 application form.

[48]"[Minutes of The] Admissions Committee, 1946-47, November 4, 1946," 1, OCOA.

[49]Director of Admissions Robert L. Jackson citing past admission's criteria. "Trustee Minutes, November 11-12, 1960" 5, in folder,"Admissions & Rel. to Secondary Schools II, 1943-65 ," Office of the Secretary, Box 150, OCA.

any statement of religious preference from admissions forms."[50] Some of the trustees sounded an alarm regarding rising numbers of students from the East, particularly New York City and the need to apply stricter screening to these applicants if Oberlin wanted to maintain a representative cross section of "American life." Another commented: "[Oberlin's t]raditionally liberal and democratic climate encourages admission of students who range widely in their social and religious attitudes. A 'beatnik' element exists, but [it is] far from predominant."[51] The most interesting statement placed into the minutes was the following: "Several Trustees expressed concern for the maintenance of Oberlin's announced position as a 'distinctively Christian college.'"[52]

SECTION 4
JEWS AND ADMISSION TRENDS

As cited in the introduction, the College maintained lists of Jewish students through 1951. In addition they kept a separate tally sheet on the number and percentage Jews represented each year at Oberlin (Appendix 1, "Jewish Students at Oberlin").

According to the Secretary's first Annual Report in 1938-39:

> Statistics on certain subjects are kept in the Secretary's Office from year to year. . . . Special studies are made from time to time for special purposes. These studies do not usually become the basis for continuing tables, but may do so if they are found

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[50]Ibid.
[51]Ibid., 6.
[52]Ibid.

to have sufficient value and interest as matters of current information.[53]

The report cited specific breakdowns on sex, state of origin, foreign students, race and religion. At the end of the report the Secretary called attention to two matters: "The enrolment [sic] of students by race and religion shows an increase in the number and proportion of Jewish students from 9, or .5 of 1% in 1929-30 to 81 or 4.3% in 1938-39. The registration for 1939-40, however, shows a decline to 66 or 3.4% of the total enrollment."[54]

It seems likely that the statistics the Secretary said he maintained for Jewish students were the same lists preserved today in the Oberlin Archives in the Office of the Secretary's records. Yet such records were not entirely accurate. Although in the Secretary's report he cited that statistics were kept on "religion" I never located any other lists based on religious identification.[55]

In addition, close to 10% of the people on the Jewish lists, who returned my questionnaire, were not Jewish.[56] The last year the list was compiled was 1951 which corresponds with the last year that the question of religion appeared on the application form.

The statistics culled from the Secretary's list, compiled in Appendix 1, illustrate a rather curious trend. In 1929 the Jewish

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[53]"First Annual Report as Secretary of the College, 1938-1939" 8, in folder, "Annual Report - Secretary's Reports/Questionnaires 1930-1942," Office of the Secretary, Box 167, OCA.

[54]Ibid., 10.

[55]The College did maintain lists for Black students dating back to the nineteenth century.

[56]Ten out of the 18 mentioned that some or all of their grandparents or parents were Jewish but that they, the respondents, didn't identify as Jewish. I checked a few of the admission application and under "religious preference" some had written "Quaker" or "Methodist" (235, 256).

presence among Oberlin College students was less than half of one percent. From 1934 to 1937 it hovered around 2%, in 1942 it climbed as high as 7%, but through 1950 it leveled off to a constant 5-6%. A startling statistic occurred between 1945-46 and 1946-47. The College enrollment jumped from 1,791 to 2,399, increasing by over 600 students. At the same time the number of Jewish students increased from 103 to 120. More importantly, in percentages, Jewish students decreased from 5.75% to 5.0%. Even as the school dramatically increased its size, Jews remained at 5%.

Were Jews not applying to Oberlin? That could be one explanation yet Oberlin was an attractive school for Jewish students. It had no fraternities and sororities which have, historically, not only discriminated against Jews but in some cases have dominated the social life so as to virtually exclude Jews from campus activities. In addition, since the 1920s Jews applied to colleges in increasing numbers. Granted, although Oberlin's location was not on the Eastern seaboard where the majority of Jewish immigrants settled, it was close to Cleveland and did have a progressive reputation for admitting women and Blacks in the nineteenth Century.

Moving beyond speculation, though, a document exists which, although covering only a short period of time, proves that Jews were, in fact, applying to Oberlin in large numbers. Titled "Survey of Jewish students applying to Oberlin College, those accepted and percentage" (see Appendix 2) the College compared the number of

Jewish women and men applying to Oberlin to that of non-Jews applying from 1946 to 1949.[57]

With this document one can compare the percentages accepted of the Jewish and non-Jewish applicants. The first numbers I will discuss come directly from the document and show that a far larger percentage of Jews were filing out applicants than the percentage of Jews admitted.

	% of Jewish applicants filed out of entire applicant pool	% of Jewish applicants accepted out of entire accepted pool
1947-48	17.0	5.6
1948-49	20.4	10.3
1949-50	18.6	8.9

By calculating the percentage of applicants accepted out of the non-Jewish applicant pool to that of the applicants accepted out of the Jewish applicant pool it becomes clear that it was far easier to gain admission to Oberlin if one were not Jewish.

	% of Non-Jews accepted out of non-Jewish applicant pool	% of Jews accepted out of Jewish applicant pool
1947-48	40.0	13.0
1948-49	43.0	21.0
1949-50	51.0	24.0

For men, in short supply at Oberlin throughout the twentieth century, the numbers are striking.[58]

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[57]There is some question as to the accuracy of the 1946-47 numbers because it is noted at the bottom of the sheet, "since cards are no longer in Office, no accurate figure available." However, the three years following show a clear trend.

[58]Again I have excluded the statistics from 1946. Yet, the record shows the acceptance percentages for 1946 were 9% for Jewish applicants and 40% for non-Jewish applicants.

	% of non-Jewish men accepted out of non-Jewish male applicant pool	% of Jewish men accepted out of Jewish male applicant pool
1947-48	52.0	18.0
1948-49	54.0	27.0
1949-50	64.0	33.0

For women the numbers were even worse:

	% of non-Jewish women accepted out of non-Jewish female applicant pool	% of Jewish women accepted out of Jewish female applicant pool
1947-48	31.0	8.0
1948-49	34.0	16.0
1949-50	41.0	16.0

It should be noted that these statistics, at least for the first year or two, covered the period when veterans returned to colleges in large numbers. Although Oberlin did give special consideration to veterans that could only explain why more men than women were accepted, not more non-Jews than Jews.

Quite possibly Oberlin, like many schools during the early and mid-twentieth century, maintained some form of a quota system for Jewish students. Perhaps what lay behind it was a concern that Oberlin maintain a Christian environment; Jewish students probably were not the ideal bearers of such tradition.

In 1948 the Oberlin College Interracial Committee was formed to address a number of issues on campus. One of the issues was the application form used by the College.[59] The minutes of a 1949 Admission Committee Meeting noted that President Stevenson stated

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[59]The following contains references to remarks made by particular individuals. It is not my intentions to malign anyone, especially those no longer living, yet it is particularly important to cite names when appropriate

> that a good many students were now asking questions about admission policies and that there were various items on the application form which they wished to have removed. He felt that it would be wise for members of the Admissions Committee and faculty members in general not to grant interviews on admission policies. [We do] use discrimination in various admissions policies - we discriminate in favor of men over wome[n], in favor of children of alumni over non alumni applicants, over sections of the west over the east, over students of high scholastic standing over those of low scholastic standing.[60]

A member of the Committee expressed desire to know more about the process of admission and the method of selection used and another meeting was held to address these questions. Director of Admission Robert Jackson presided and began by quoting a gentleman from Yale who had recently described applicants as falling under three categories: those who are clearly qualified from all standpoints, those who are clearly not qualified and those whom

> a great many factors must be considered depending on the institution to which the applicants are applying. Some schools omit certain types of racial or religious groups which they don't want, some admit students because of alumni pressure, because of trustee pressure, because of geographical areas represented, extra curricular activities presented, etc.[61]

According to Jackson "At Oberlin we are primarily interested in whether a boy or a girl can handle the work satisfactorily here."[62]

Questions continued into such areas as the selection of male and female applicants, the importance of an interview, and what pre-

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because as officers of the College they represented the school and, through their job, affected the policies thereof.

[60]"Minutes of Admission Committee Meeting, November 14, 1949, Admissions Office," 4, OCOA.

[61]"Admissions Committee Meeting, Monday, November 28, 1949," 1, OCOA.

[62]Ibid.

entrance examinations should be given. Near the conclusion of the meeting Jackson raised the request made by the Interracial Committee that the Admissions Office eliminate from the application the student's place of birth, mother's maiden name, religious preference, and inclusion of a picture. The objections were based on the possibility that such questions could be used to determine whether or not the applicant was Jewish.

Such concern had been raised nationally by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith:

> The President's Commission on Higher Education holds that a case of discrimination can be made against virtually any educational institution which includes questions about religion, race, nativity of parents, and similar data on its application forms. Obviously, a considerable amount of information is necessary if a college is to maintain an intelligent, democratic admissions policy.
>
> But some of the information requested by some colleges seems pointless unless the college intends to establish racial or religious bars. Sometimes the college inquiries forthrightly about the candidate's religion, color, or nationality. In other cases, the approach is more indirect. There is an inexplicable request for the mother's maiden name, or for the birthplaces of both parents. On the other hand, some application forms are scrupulously non-discriminatory, but the inquisitive admissions committees pick up the required information on various supplementary forms--health blanks, the regular report from the high school principal, and so on.[63]

In the minutes to the Admissions Committee meeting, Secretary Donald Love was noted as stating that he "saw no reason why we should be pressured into allowing a student committee to

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[63]A.C. Ivy and Irwin Ross, "Religion and Race: Barriers to College?" Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 153, (Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1949): 21.

judge what we need for our purposes of selection. We have a good record and . . . we should go ahead this year as planned."[64] Another member agreed with Mr. Love but felt that if the questions were not essential, why ask them.

According to Jackson, the Interracial Committee felt that Oberlin should take the lead on this issue. In a letter to the Committee on Admissions, the Interracial Committee stated its case as follows:

> Whether or not these questions are used for discrimination, the fact remains that they could so be used. Believing that Oberlin College should not be laid open to any such charge and agreeing that the questions are irrelevant for the purposes of admission, the Interracial Committee strongly recommends their removal and awaits your decision.[65]

It was finally resolved that these questions would be considered when the time came to print the next application forms. According to Dean Stewart, to change them now "would be an admission that we had used them for discriminatory reasons."[66]

On February 3, 1950, the Committee on Admissions met and heard a report from a special sub-committee which had met with the Interracial Committee. With regards to the issue of the mother's maiden name, "Mr. Love said that he felt there was no particular value attached to the mother's maiden name so far as admission was

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[64]"Admissions Committee Meeting, Monday, November 28, 1949," 3, OCOA.

[65][Letter to Committee on Admissions, November 26, 1949, from Oberlin College Student-Faculty Interracial Committee] in folder, "Admission's Information 1950-1960," Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Box 1, OCA.

[66]"[Minutes of The] Admissions Committee Meeting, Monday, November 28, 1949," 1, OCOA.

concerned and that we could yield on that."[67] Another member objected to Mr. Love's use of "yield" and suggested that if the question were of no value it should simply be deleted.[68] On the issue of religious preference the Committee decided that it was possible to ascertain "church preference" upon arrival and agreed to remove the question from the form.

A lengthy discussion ensued on the issue of a picture. The Interracial Committee understood the need for a picture to refresh the Director's memory if the student had been interviewed and suggested that the student bring a photograph to the interview. The discussion turned its focus to the claim that a picture was necessary "so that colored and white would not be [roomed] together unknowingly."[69] The question of who was prejudiced, the students or the house directors, was discussed until a member suggested that the meeting was intended to deal with admissions not room assignments.

The question was then posed as to whether the picture was actually needed to help select students or whether its purpose was to assist with room assignments. "Mr. Love responded that we had a right to require the picture for any need or purpose we wanted."[70] One member expressed the opinion "that we [need] to gain some insight on the social adjustment of applicants and that the picture was one means of doing this."[71] Another asserted the need of securing "good negro applicants" and suggested that "[o]rdinarily, the

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[67]"[Minutes of The] Admissions Committee Meeting, Friday, February 3, 1950," 1, OCOA.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid., 2.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Ibid., 3.

colored applicant does not fully measure up in terms of grades and tests scores with the white applicants." Another member responded that: "colored applicants had every right to object to special consideration."[72] Finally,

> Mr. Love . . . commented that we should be aware of the source of the pressure. He felt that none of this pressure was coming from the colored group. *We are talking about two races one of which is aggressive and one which isn't. Most of this pressure is coming from the Jews rather than from the negros* [sic]. If we eliminate all the questions which the Inter-Racial Committee calls discriminating we would probably find that the net result would be that we would have no more colored on the campus but that *we would have more Jews.*[73] (italics added)

The committee voted ten for and five against to keep the picture on the application. It was further moved that place of birth, religious preference, and mother's maiden name be removed.[74]

SECTION 5
JEWISH QUOTA AT OBERLIN -- THE PERCEPTION

The question of the existence of a Jewish quota at Oberlin College in the early to mid-twentieth century probably will never be resolved. No document exists that explicitly states such a policy, but evidence shows that the school may have maintained one.

Very few respondents in Group A suspected the College of having a Jewish quota -- only 8.9% of those attending the College from 1927 to 1939. Yet none of the respondents before 1937, representing 50% of Group A, thought the college had a quota. Interestingly, in the years 1937 to 1939, 17% of the respondents

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[72]Ibid.
[73]Ibid.
[74]Ibid., 3-4.

from that three year period suspected the College maintained one. Overall, 33.3% of Group A responded that they didn't know.

The responses given by those who answered affirmatively to the quota question fell into a few categories. One respondent believed Oberlin maintained a quota because Jewish students "formed such a tiny percentage [at Oberlin] in 1938, '39, '40." A number, while recognizing the national trend, were not fully convinced that Oberlin followed it. "Most colleges did during my years. Oberlin seemed less interested in questions which would tend to disclose ethnic or religious background." The most frequent comment was the fact that most institutions at that time had a Jewish quota. As one respondent explained, "[yes] only because this was the era of quotas at all colleges."[75]

By far the majority in Group A did not believe the college maintained a quota and they made a number of interesting comments. A 1929 entrant argued that during this period Oberlin didn't attract many Jewish applicants. "[The number of Jewish students] was hardly a problem for the college. How many Jews could find Oberlin?" By the late 1930s one respondent perceived the school in a different light. "There were enough of us that if [a quota] existed it must have been much higher than comparable colleges." A few saw a desire on the part of the College to increase Jewish enrollment rather than restrict it. "We used to kid that Dean of Admissions Bill Seaman was leaning toward 100% quota. He seemed

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[75]12, 133, 126. Another respondent, who wasn't sure, said "I rather assumed that there was one, but I had no evidence to support the assumption" (1).

to be trying to urge promising Jewish students to choose Oberlin." Another student concurred. "Indeed, my strong impression was that [Oberlin] desired to attract and increase Jewish applicants."[76] The percentages in Appendix 1 bear out these assertions; from 1929 to 1939 the percentage of Jewish students rose from .5% to 3.4%.

By Group B, 1940 to 1945, the number of respondent who suspected a quota dramatically increased; 27% believed the College maintained a quota and 23.6% weren't sure. Less than half, 46.1%, of the respondents, thought the school did not. A yearly breakdown from 1940 to 1945 gives a better picture of the rather interesting fluctuations which occurred. From 1940 to 1942 those who suspected steadily increased.[77] A very high number of respondents entering in 1943 were either unsure of whether the school maintained a quota or were convinced it did not.[78] From 1944 to 1945 a dramatic increase in those who suspected occurred and far fewer didn't know.[79] Some respondents mentioned that all schools had quotas but questioned whether Oberlin did. "I was aware that there were relatively few Jewish students in my class," said one respondent, "and [I] was aware that other colleges did have quotas." "In those days we assumed, unhappily," said another, "that most colleges had a quota."[80] As in Group A, a few students acknowledged

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[76]269, 151, 156, 13

[77]1940: 18.8%, 1941: 21.4% and 1942: 25.0%.

[78]In 1943, 43.8% of the respondents didn't know and 43.8% said no. Only 12.5% said yes.

[79]In 1944, 35.3% of the respondents said they suspected but in 1945, 60.0% of the respondents suspected. In 1944, 23.5% said they didn't know and in 1945, 10.0% didn't know.

[80]207, 248. Others made similar comments, "I felt all colleges had an unwritten Jewish quota" (94). Another said, "It was common knowledge. . . that all colleges had Jewish quotas" (27).

that there were Jewish quotas elsewhere but expressed some surprise at the idea that Oberlin may have had one. "That such quotas existed was known at the time, in general, but I never particularly connected the idea with Oberlin." And another expressed disbelief. "I didn't know of a quota and would be surprised and shocked to learn there was one."[81]

Others felt that if Oberlin did have a quota it was large. "There were not many Jewish students and it was common knowledge that colleges had quotas, but I had felt that Oberlin had a higher quota due to its 'liberal reputation'." Another respondent phrased it this way. "I suspected a 'benign quota' i.e., a relatively large portion of Jewish students were admitted (but it was controlled)."[82]

A few students had no doubt in their minds that Oberlin did maintain a quota. "[A Jewish quota was] widely discussed among Jewish students as well as college adviser[s] in high school." Another said, "There was no secret about it," while a third said, "There was no indication but I believe it was common knowledge that there was a quota system at Oberlin as well as everywhere else."[83]

Some respondents gave more detailed explanations as to why they believed Oberlin maintained a Jewish quota:

> I had the idea that admission policy was to aim for a target % of Jewish students in line with the national population proportion. This was supposedly in line with other admission sector targets (geographic, international, sex, race, etc.)

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[81]245, 280. Another commented "I thought they never had a quota for any one group" (117).

[82]275, 213

[83]101, 97, 184. Other comments included, "It was common knowledge (and statistics bore out this fact) that there was a 2% quota -- but then again almost every private school in those days had one" (30).

> designed to achieve a broadly diverse student body. I may have learned this from Bill Seaman, admissions director at the time -- and probably I approved of it at the time.[84]

Another respondent wrote, "Dr. [ ] [Professor of Philosophy] told us that Jewish quotas were the same as regional ones. Bill Seaman said same, 100 -- no more."[85] Others concurred on the idea of a regional/Jewish quota. "N.Y quota obviously partly Jewish," said one respondent, while another said "It was known that there was a regional quota."[86]

A respondent who thought there was a quota suspected tight competition between the Jewish applicants. "A small number of people (~5%) with Jewish names many of whom were outstanding, so probably highly competitively selected." Another student suspected that a quota existed and related it to his placement on a waitlist. "I was refused admission originally -- and the principal at my high school suspected a quota was the reason -- at that time - 1941 - <u>all</u> major private colleges had quotas -- an accepted fact."[87]

An interesting juxtaposition occurred between two respondents. The first who attended the college from 1940 to 1943 said, "I thought they had a quota <u>prior</u> to my attendance -- they were in a funny situation because most other college did have quotas then and *they were inundated by Jewish applicants.*" The second, who attended from 1942 to 1943 and 1946 to 1948 said, "Not in those days [1942-1948]. But I think an informal one was adhered to

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[84] 39

[85] 50. In an attempt to maintain confidentiality of respondents I have not named faculty or administrators.

[86] 47, 96

[87] 40, 278

in *later days. The numbers of Jews at Oberlin in my day seemed relatively low*"[88] (italics added).

The perceptions of many in Group B are matched by the numbers in Appendix 1. In 1940-41 the percentage of Jewish students at Oberlin was 5.4% and it rose only to 6.6% in 1944-45, fluctuating slightly during that five year period. The number of Jews was relatively low and remained constant during that time.

The majority of those in Group C, 1946 to 1951, thought that the College did not have a quota.[89] Not surprisingly, the highest number believing the College did maintain a quota enrolled between 1946 to 1948;[90] this was the period when national attention was focused on the question of discriminatory quotas in higher education, as well as when the Interracial Committee was formed at Oberlin which addressed concerns around particular questions on the application form. Those who answered affirmatively again based their belief on a number of factors. Some concluded that maintaining quotas was still common practice during the time, while others asserted that the Jewish quota at Oberlin was similar to a regional/New York quota. Many of the respondents gave specific numbers.

One who mentioned that a quota was a given said, "In those days all colleges had a religious quota. It was no secret but a fact known to all and accepted by most everyone as normal." "I guess I

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[88]209, 36

[89]63.0% said they didn't suspect, 16.3% did and 17.4% didn't know.

[90]Those who suspected the College maintained a quota were 21.1% in 1946, 16.7% in 1947, 28.6% in 1948, 9.1% in 1949, 11.1% in 1950 and 0.0% in 1951 (only one respondent entered that year).

believed that it did," said another, "though I never heard anything definitive about it. I just thought it did. Again, I seemed to accept such a grim reality." Not surprisingly, perceptions varied. While one respondent said, "I am sure they did [have a quota], though it was a very liberal quota" another said yes because, "There weren't many Jews on campus." Finally, one said, "Absolutely! How else explain (esp[ecially] in Conservatory) an institution of such high repute with such an iota of Jews?"[91]

There were also a number of respondents who connected a Jewish quota with a New York/regional quota. "We heard it did -- particularly for Easterners - N.Y.C." Another said, "Probably they did partly based on wish not to have East Coast very large block of students e.g. Jewish and NYC/East Coast."[92]

Finally there was a set of respondents who said they had investigated the issue when they were students at Oberlin and had concluded that there was a quota. Interestingly, based on the years of attendance, the Jewish percentage they estimated the college maintained was similar to the percentage the College claimed on Appendix 1.

Between 1948 to 1954 the percentage of Jewish students grew from 5% to 10%. A 1946-1949 respondent said, "It seemed fairly obvious that the quota was around 5%." Another, who attended between 1948-1954, recalled a higher number: "As I remember there were about 100 Jewish students out of about 1,000 -- this would fit with quota I know existed at Columbia College at that time."

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[91]67, 268, 71, 52, 82
[92]239, 206

"Professor Harvey Goldberg, a History teacher, made a study of the college records for many years before 1948," wrote another respondent, "and discovered that there was always 10% of the freshman class who were Jewish." Still another respondent recalled a bit of investigation done when he attended, "Some people went through names in Hi-O-Hi [yearbook] and concluded that Oberlin's percentage of Jewish students was what it would have been were there a quota. I believe that Dean of Admissions Jackson, in conversation, denied the existence of a quota."[93]

Some of the respondents found the Jewish representation high or were not particularly bothered by the idea of a quota. "Jews always suspected that there were quotas in those days" said one respondent, "I think I figured about 10% of my class was Jewish but that was very high for a Congregationalist mid-Western school while it would be very low at Columbia." Another said, "Oberlin had all kinds of 'quotas' in its attempt to create a broad based student body."[94]

A few others concluded that Oberlin's small Jewish population was due to its inability to attract many Jewish students. "I knew that many schools had a 10% Jewish quota at that time. I believed because of the social consciousness of humanitarian emphasis at Oberlin that the small number of Jewish students was the result of the College's location and 'avowedly Christian' tradition." Another said, "I assumed that it was not an attractive place for Jewish students because it was in such a remote, small town." Yet, another

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[93]130, 264, 225, 113
[94]197, 132

respondent didn't think there was a Jewish quota but rather a regional one because of the large number of Jewish applicants. "I didn't sense this -- but suspect that in that era, there was a glut of very good Jewish applicants from New York and a geographical quota took the place of a religious one."[95]

Many of those who denied the existence of a quota at Oberlin argued that the school enrolled a high percentage of Jewish students. "There always were a generous number of Jewish students on campus (perhaps 15%)," said one respondent, "The informal 'word' was that there specifically was not a quota system at O.C." Another said, "Very hard to believe [there was a Jewish quota]. Otherwise how could a Jew from New York City with no Oberlin connections get into Oberlin." Finally, one respondent concluded that he got in *because* he was Jewish. He didn't suspect Oberlin had a quota "yet quotas were common in other schools. Actually I felt I was admitted partly because I was Jewish, to broaden the student body."[96]

Only a few of the respondents in Group D, 1952 to 1968, made comments concerning this question. By 1960 none of the respondents believed the College maintained a Jewish quota. In fact, all of them asserted it did not, none "didn't know." However, up until 1960, 14% of the respondents did suspect a quota.[97]

By far most of the respondents who suspected that a quota existed did so out of the belief that it was still common practice.[98] One respondent who suspected said, "Yes, there were rumors that

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[95]199, 81, 66
[96]200, 265, 103
[97]11.6% of the respondents didn't know and 72.1% said no.
[98]163, 164, 167, 173, 187, 220

one existed when I was there and [I] dimly recall [an] alumni writing to the [Alumni] magazine complaining about non-Christian students at Oberlin, etc."[99] Another respondent said, "I doubt [the College maintained a quota]. I think being 'tolerant' about religion and also race was part of the Oberlin ethos."[100]

I contacted Robert L. Jackson who served as Dean of Admission from 1949 to 1973 and asked him about the school's policy towards admission of Jewish applicants. He said that he did not know whether or not there was any policy before he came concerning admission of Jews although he doubted it.

> When I arrived on the Oberlin campus in July 1949, there were no quotas of any kind, explicit or implicit, related to the admission of students to the college. The closest thing to a quota was the statement in the catalog that in recognition of the time honored relationship to the college, or words to that effect, preference in admission would be given to children of alumni. Since alumni children did not overwhelm the Office of Admission, this was never a problem.[101]

Mr. Jackson concurred with many of the respondents when he addressed the issue of whether Jews wanted to come to Oberlin. "The climate at Oberlin has always been attractive for Jewish students. The liberal atmosphere; the lack of fraternities and sororities; the emphasis on the academic program; and the absence of a restrictive protestant church affiliation made Oberlin a strong

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[99]167, this respondent attended from 1957 to 1961. I located one letter, written by alumni Don Weber, but it appeared in the April 1964 edition of the Alumni Magazine; Weber's comments were similar in effect to those the respondent refers to in his comment.

[100]192

[101]Robert L. Jackson, Pinehurst, North Carolina, to Andrea R. Meyer, Oberlin, Ohio, 25 March 1988, possession of Andrea R. Meyer.

alternative to the leading institutions in the Northeast."[102] This assertion coupled with the statistics on Appendix 2 showing that between 17% and 20% of the applicants from 1946-1949 were Jewish clearly illustrate that Oberlin College was during, the 1940s, attractive to Jewish students.

Why then did the number of Oberlin's Jewish students remain at a virtual constant until the end of the 1940s? Was there a Jewish quota? Some have argued that limiting the number of Jewish students, particularly from New York, was an appropriate step to take to create a diverse student body. Others have asserted that to assume Jews constitute one type, thus necessitating a quota, is a fallacy.

SECTION 6
JEWISH STUDENTS AT OBERLIN -- AN OVERVIEW

Although there was no "typical" Jewish student nor "typical" Jewish experience the data collected on the 286 Jewish respondents entering Oberlin from 1927 to 1968 clearly reveal several important trends. These trends include the religious background of the students before they went to college, their reasons for attending Oberlin, and their willingness to identify themselves as Jewish juxtaposed with a lack of interest in Judaism, their increasing sensitivity during and after World War II to Jewish issues and concerns as well as the school's insensitivity to both, and, finally, their perceptions of Oberlin's Jewish faculty. Although I will highlight these trends in this section, some of these issues will be

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[102]Ibid.

addressed more fully in the following sections as I discuss each chronological Group separately.

The Jewish upbringing of the respondents remained varied throughout the years. All the major religious movements were represented, although there were decreasing numbers of respondents from an Orthodox background and increasing numbers of respondents from both Conservative and non-religious backgrounds after 1940. This paralleled changes in the Jewish population in the U.S. as the post-immigration generations desired to assimilate quickly.

The reasons cited for attending Oberlin focus on a number of particulars. Overwhelmingly, a large number from each group came to Oberlin because of the school's academic or musical excellence. The percentage citing this increased each year, undoubtedly the result of Oberlin's growing national reputation. Another benefit of Oberlin, cited by a number of respondents, was the fact that the institution had neither fraternities nor sororities.[103] Oberlin's freedom from that social system constantly attracted Jewish students who wanted to be in a school where religious background was irrelevant to acceptance within a community. Interestingly, though, a few male respondents made reference to Oberlin's organized houses, dormitories where the residents were voted in (I will address this later in the paper).

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[103]11.1% in Group A; 15.7% in Group B; 17.4% in Group C and 11.6% in Group D.

Virtually no respondent reported hiding her or his Jewish identity from peers or professors.[104] This was perhaps because the atmosphere at Oberlin was such that, for the most part, these Jewish students did not fear reprisal or exclusion because of their Jewish identity. The majority of the respondents, particularly during the earlier years, were not, however, interested in maintaining or developing their Jewish identity while at Oberlin.

During the 1920s to the 1930s, the Jewish student in college was often a first generation American and pressure to conform and assimilate appeared strong; this may have been the case at Oberlin. Numerous articles from that time period articulated the view expressed by Lewis Gannett writing for The Nation in 1923,

> The Russian Jew has an hereditary respect for culture, and he seems also to have a certain intensity which if it is not a racial characteristic is at least a group trait, acquired and transmitted through long centuries of oppression, isolated and thwarted opportunity. It translated itself into an ambition and a persistence which we Anglo-Saxons hate. . . . [The Jewish immigrant] sends his children to college a generation or two sooner than other stocks, and as a result there are in fact more dirty Jews and tactless Jews in college than dirty and tactless Italians, Armenians, or Slovaks.[105]

Few of the earlier respondents sought out other Jewish students and the majority did not celebrate Jewish holidays. Perhaps perceptions such as Gannett's played heavily on the minds of these

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[104]In all groups over 80% of the respondents said their classmates knew they were Jewish. However, only one respondent, in Group C, said she wished not.

[105]Lewis S. Gannett, "Is American Anti-Semitic?" The Nation, Vol 116, 1923: 330-332.

Jewish students who shared the common desire to assimilate and fit in in order not to be thought of as "dirty and tactless" Jews.

As World War II approached, the students' level of sensitivity to their Jewish identities increased. By the post-war generation more of the respondents were examining their Oberlin experience from a more focused Jewish perspective. As the number of Jewish students increased in colleges and perhaps began to feel more confident about their Jewish/American identity, a growing minority of Oberlin Jewish students emerged seeking various means to observe Jewish holidays. Many cited limitations in their ability to do this at Oberlin.

By the 1940s and into the 1950s the expectations of Jewish students had changed, and they increasingly perceived the institution's behavior towards them as insensitive to their needs. A growing number displayed an awareness of their Jewish identity (many cited their pride in being Jewish) and fewer felt constrained to accept the isolation they endured as a minority; many felt uncomfortable and sometimes resentful of Oberlin's traditional *Christian* practices, particularly attending chapel and reciting doxology over meals.

The respondents also documented another trend: the number of Jewish faculty on campus was tiny if not, at times, non-existent. As Oberlin moved into the late 1940s the number of faculty identified as Jewish by the students increased. However, beyond Harvey Goldberg, who taught from 1946 to 1949, the respondents

mentioned only a handful of faculty whom they believed to be Jewish.[106]

SECTION 7
GROUP A (1927-1939)

At the beginning of the twentieth century Jews immigrated to the United States in growing numbers. Since the majority settled on the Eastern seaboard they became increasingly visible. By 1910 the Jewish population in New York City was 3%; by 1920 it was 30%.[107] The response towards these new immigrants was xenophobic; in 1922 immigration laws were tightened to prevent more "foreigners" from entering the United States. In addition, the rising level of anti-Semitism led many American Jews (particularly those after the immigrant generation) to abandon their religious practices in the hope that they would not be perceived as "different."

From 1927 to 1939 approximately 106 Jews attended Oberlin. Based on that estimate the respondents represent 42.4% of this population. From the respondents' comments the central characteristic of this group was a desire to assimilate; the majority reported that their Jewish identity was not an important factor to many of their experiences.

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[106]Time did not permit me to research in depth Oberlin Jewish faculty beyond a discovery I made during my research in the archives. Until the arrival of Harvey Goldberg there were possibly one or two other Jewish professors in the Conservatory. There's a rather interesting story about a man who more than likely was the first Jewish professor at Oberlin. His name was Joshua J. Seixas and he taught Hebrew for a year in the Theology Seminary from 1835 to 1836. Although the documentation shows that he was Jewish he became the Hebrew instructor for Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Church, and stayed on as the Hebrew instructor for the Mormon Church. "Joshua J. Seixas" in Alumni & Development Records, Box 71, OCA.

[107]Stephen Steinberg, "How Jewish Quotas Began," Commentary, 52 (1971): 68.

The religious background of Group A illustrates this point. 71% of the respondents cited one or more particular religious upbringing including Jewish education, confirmation, and Bar or Bat'Mitvah.[108] Although compared to the other Groups these respondents came from what appeared to be the most religious upbringing, the majority did not maintain their religious practices during their years at Oberlin.

During this time Oberlin attracted the majority of its students from the East. This was true for its Jewish population. The highest representation came from New York (31.1%), Ohio (28.9%), and New Jersey (15.6%). Only six other states were represented including Illinois, Michigan, and California. All but seven of the respondents were enrolled in the College; the others studied in the Conservatory.

I asked the respondents why they chose Oberlin and whether Judaism played a role in either their attending Oberlin or, if they left before graduating, their departure from Oberlin. The majority cited the academic excellence as their reason for attendance. In addition, a few said the school was recommended or they received a scholarship.[109] Only one of the respondents said Judaism was a factor in attending. Of the five students leaving Oberlin before graduating two said Judaism was a factor. One, accused of doing something improper said, "The pressure put on me, I feel in

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[108] 31.1%, 8.9% and 22.2% respectively. I only asked the respondents to describe their Jewish background I did not ask specifics so it's important to note that the numbers could be higher for all of the groups.

[109] 46.7% cited academic, 35.6% recommended, 24.4% scholarship. Other responses included the political or liberal outlook of the student body (13.3%), the liberal arts education (11.1%), co-education (8.9%), and because a family member attended (4.4%, 2 respondents). Some respondents cited more than one of these reasons.

retrospect, would not have been applied to a WASP." The other suggested that it may have affected his decision to a minor degree; he transferred because he wanted a wider range of studies and a broader social life.[110]

A number of the questions on the survey elicited comments from the respondents regarding the institutional setting for Jewish students at Oberlin. A little less than a quarter thought the school was insensitive to the needs of its Jewish students but many said they didn't know.[111] The most frequently mentioned issue was chapel, although perceptions about it varied. "Chapel attendance was expected and was a Christian experience," said one respondent. Another found it not particularly religious, "Chapel attendance was compulsory as I recall but it was not Christian-oriented and not offensive to me. Sorry to say, no recognizable Jewish content."[112]

Very few incidents of discrimination either by academic or administrative personnel were reported.[113] Four students mentioned some episode with administrative personnel, particularly deans. A Conservatory student related a story which deeply affected his experience at Oberlin:

> Dean [ ] on the occasion of my infraction of rules (practicing on Sunday after 11 a.m.) dismissed me from Oberlin and readmitted me after informing me that being Jewish, I should apologize for my act with the comment that 'I needed all the

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[110] 12, 193

[111] 22.2% said it was, 13.3% said they didn't know.

[112] 279, 6

[113] Academic discrimination was reported by 4.4% (or 2) of the respondents, institutional discrimination by 8.9% (or 4).

> friends that I could get.' This was my first experience with anti-Semitism and shocked me deeply.[114]

Although only two respondents reported incidents of academic discrimination, responses to questions regarding academic setting indicated that, overall, Jewish students felt invisible in this period. The majority of the respondents noted that they did not encounter positive Jewish views in the classroom except for a few occurrences in religion courses. One respondent summed up what the prevailing attitude appeared to have been during this time period. "As everyone knows, the late thirties was the period of the rise of Naziism. It would have been unthinkable for an Oberlin professor to make anti-Semitic remarks publicly."[115] Yet one of the respondents recalled a gym professor who had recently returned from Germany and was very impressed with Nazi discipline. "He would have us stand at attention in gym class at the end and raise our hands in the Nazi salute as we were sent to the locker room."[116]

Whether out of a desire to keep a low profile or because they lacked interest, the majority of the respondents did not seek out ways to celebrate the Jewish holidays while at Oberlin. Over a quarter of them explicitly said that they didn't observe them while only 13.3% said they missed a class, paper or exam because of a religious conflict.[117] Although there were no services on campus the few who did celebrate didn't encounter any difficulty in making

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[114]279

[115]156

[116]193 (attended from 1934 to 1935).

[117]26.0% said they didn't celebrate. However, the number could be higher because I did not specifically ask whether or not they practiced just whether they experienced any problems in celebrating.

arrangements to attend services elsewhere. One student who chose not to celebrate pointed out that Oberlin had a policy against cutting class which would have made celebrating a bit difficult. Another reported "Freshman year I fasted for Yom Kippur . . . on the wrong day!" Oberlin was rather oblivious to Jewish holidays but most students were not bothered. "Classes were always held on Jewish holidays; I don't recall any discussion of not holding them. It seemed acceptable, usual practice."[118] Perhaps by ignoring the Jewish holidays, Oberlin subtly discouraged Jews from celebrating.

Social life for Jewish students was frequently described as no different than for non-Jewish students. Yet first year Jewish students often found themselves rooming with other Jewish students; it appears that housemothers maintained the practice of matching Jews with other Jews. Some respondents disputed the apparent assumption made by the housemothers that all one needed to have in common to live together was to be Jewish. One respondent noted, "After freshman year my [Jewish] roommate and I were relieved to separate." Another said, "I suspected that my freshman year housemother had me room with a Quaker in the belief that he would likely be more tolerant."[119] In this year, 1939, there were simply not enough Jewish students to go around.

No Jewish activities were held on campus in the years 1927-1939 although there were some attempts to provide religious activities off campus.[120] Only two of the respondents thought a

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[118]151, 267, 147

[119]151, 133

[120]One respondent mentioned that he organized Friday night services once a month with a Rabbi in Lorain (141).

Jewish community existed, and one noted: "There is always a certain bond between Jews in an environment where they are in the minority." For the majority of students at Oberlin the YMCA-YWCA played the central role in campus activities. Some of the Jewish students felt included in this and one said the Y asked him to help arrange for Jewish students to attend services in Cleveland. Another student, however, felt uncomfortable joining the Y. "I can recall being interested in the activities of the YWCA but unwilling to sign a commitment to the organization because it demanded Christian belief." Overall, the vast majority of the Jewish students were not interested in doing anything that related to their Jewishness and this was best illustrated by one incident in the mid-1930s when, according to one respondent, an attempt to form a Hillel chapter at Oberlin failed because not enough Jewish students were interested.[121]

Six of the respondents reported incidents of social discrimination.[122] Most of them said the occurrences were isolated. "A curious incident in my sophomore year; a freshman student and I were having a bull session in my room. He opined that he disliked all 'niggers, catholics and Jews.' When I disclosed my Jewish ancestry he replied --the usual-- 'I don't mean you.'"[123] Another student recalled a classmate who had never met a Jew before and thought they all had horns![124]

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[121]246, 154, 221, 282

[122]Social discrimination had the highest number of occurrences in this group. Six respondents represent 13.3%.

[123]269

[124]127

A few respondents were disturbed to discover upon their arrival that Oberlin had organized houses which in some respects took on the characteristics of fraternities. As one student reported:

> There were no 'fraternities' at Oberlin. But there were 'dormitories' and I do believe there were one or two who considered themselves 'elite.' I had friends living there; but the feeling I got was that they were 'W.A.S.P.' oriented. But, let us face it, Oberlin was - no matter how open-minded, and fair, a Christian community.[125]

Another student recalled similar discomfort:

> I and a Jewish friend took our meals at 'Embassy House.' One senior resident at that house frequently made remarks to men at his table so we could hear them clearly. In general, Jewish students were not invited to room at the club-like small dorms, which operated somewhat like fraternity houses without Greek letters.[126]

Another Jewish student, who was a member of one of the houses, said:

> We were all voted into the house; so we were all supposed to be friendly with each other. In a bull session one evening, one of the fellows made a remark, not aimed at anyone in particular, but showing strong anti-Jewish bias. A non-Jew in the group immediately challenged him and smoothed it over.[127]

Finally, a number of respondents cited the scarcity of Jewish students as affecting their Oberlin experience. "I grew up in New York in Jewish neighborhoods . . . I had culture shock but that resulted from the switch from East Coast to Midwest and big city to small town." Another found that "the atmosphere was very goyish! There were no Jewish organizations or social groups with which a

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[125] 269
[126] 193
[127] 156

Jewish student could become affiliated." And one respondent said, "I noticed no difference in 'life' for Jewish students -- Oberlin was much more provincial, members of small town residents had never known a non-Christian. Their curiosity was sometimes active, but not hostile."[128]

Many respondents felt very positive when looking back at their Oberlin experience. "At Oberlin -- it seemed pretty liberal and open -- at other schools it may have been different." Another respondent drew this conclusion: "I suppose that if you were very religious, which I wasn't, social life could have been limited. . . . We were in a very small minority on the campus as a whole; possibly that made us seem more welcome and less of a threat than if we had been more numerous."[129]

SECTION 8: GROUP B (1940-1945)

By 1940 the United States was preparing for war; by 1945 the atrocities of the Holocaust were known to all. The Jewish respondents entering college during this time period were by far more attuned to their Jewish identity than were the earlier respondents. Some of Oberlin's Jewish students began seeking more affirmative, communal ways of expressing their identity. Many of them felt isolated at Oberlin which, for the most part, continued to remain oblivious to its Jewish population.

An estimated 177 Jewish students enrolled at Oberlin during this period; the respondents represent 50.2% of the Jewish

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[128] 13, 6, 1
[129] 10, 156

population. The number of students with Orthodox upbringing dropped substantially while those from Conservative increased.[130] Only 35% of the respondents cited one or more particular religious practice such as attending synagogue, confirmation, or religious education.[131]

Jewish students for the first time came to Oberlin from Texas, Kentucky and Louisiana. The numbers from Ohio and New Jersey dropped while the New York representation increased to over 57% for this group.[132] Again the majority were enrolled in the College but, in addition, there were ten Conservatory, seven graduate and one double degree student.

The reasons cited for choosing Oberlin didn't alter much. The school continued to attract on the basis of its academic reputation as well as its size, location, and liberal reputation. However, an increasing number of respondents included Judaism as a factor in their attending. Beyond many who cited the lack of fraternities and sororities, there was also a general consensus that, in some respects, Oberlin was different. "I think Oberlin was considered very attractive to Jewish students," said one respondent. "The traditions of Oberlin were compatible to our aspirations at the time. It was an island of tolerance and based recognition on merit and scholarship -- not social standing!"[133]

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[130]Only 10.1% reported their background as Orthodox while 18.0% reported it as Conservative.

[131]Synagogue and confirmation were both cited by 13.5%, Jewish education was cited by 27.0%.

[132]Ohio represented 16.9% and New Jersey only 3.4% of the population.

[133]213

World War II had a direct affect on the campus. Eight respondents were members of the Navy's V-12 Unit which was based on campus. Most of these eight were transferred by the military before graduation, while a number of other male students left to enter military service. No student cited Judaism as a factor in her or his departure.

Against the background of the war the institutional setting grew increasingly uncomfortable for many of the Jewish students. A growing number of respondents found the college to be insensitive to the needs of its Jewish students.[134]

> A more Orthodox student would have felt deprived of a recognition of his needs. *Jewish students didn't seem to exist for either Administration or other students. They weren't discriminated against, they just weren't thought about.*"[135] (italics added)

The Christian practices of the school bothered a number of students. Many resented the prayer at meal. "I remember always feeling a bit uncomfortable when a form of Christian grace was said before dinner. . . . I definitely felt like part of a small minority . . . not quite belonging." Those who cited chapel found it, for the most part, non-religious yet many were bothered that it was required, "Chapel attendance was mandatory but not religious in an obnoxious sense."[136]

A few students, while recognizing the Christian emphasis at Oberlin, acknowledged that they knew the school's religious history before coming. "Chapel was compulsory but essentially non-

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[134] 25.8% said yes, 22.5% didn't know and 44.4% said no.
[135] 249
[136] 219, 35

religious. Grace was said at meals, at least on Sundays, but one could be a non-participant. In these ways, Oberlin was clearly Christian. . . . I chose a school with a strong missionary heritage and found this more interesting than offensive."[137]

A small number of respondents felt as if they were second-class citizens at Oberlin, particularly when it came to religious recognition. "Jews, if I am representative, felt left out of the religious life on campus" while another said, "Nothing was provided for we 100 Jews to sanctify our heritage." Finally, one respondent put it rather succinctly, "If I was ever religious, I lost it at Oberlin -- at least I ate my first bacon there."[138]

Neither institutional nor academic discrimination increased, although two similar and distressing incidents were reported. Two female students mentioned problems with a female physician during their freshman orientation physical exam.[139] As one explained,

> I arrived for my examination with my roommate [ ] and [ ] (both Jewish) and a girl of Italian background. . . . We were each told in sep[a]rate sessions with Dr. [ ] that "all Jews and Italians are either too fat or too thin" and "flatfooted." I remember (being too thin) wanting to dispute at least one of these allegations: I put my bare foot on the chair and (rather hysterically) demanded that she look at my arch, which was substantial. I was sixteen years old. . . . After some consideration of the ethnic slur implications of her comments, [we] jointly reported the incident to Dean [ ] (who, as I recall, merely gave us placating comments, in the style I later came to

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[137]280

[138]42, 50, 25

[139]Although one respondent gave her name and the other didn't, I'm making an assumption this is the same physician in both incidents because the students entered in 1940 and 1941.

> associate with her). I called home in tears, wanting to leave school.[140]

The other respondent told a strikingly similar story:

> The woman doctor, looking at a pimple on my face, said, "You people have to be careful with your oily skin" (I have somewhat dark coloring). . . . [It made me feel] awful. But I was too young and naive to even think of reporting the incident. I believe she was someone hired to help out at that time. I never saw or heard of her again (thank goodness!)[141]

Two other students reported institutional discrimination. One student saw the assignment of a Jewish roommate as a means of being treated differently than other students, and one made reference to a scholarship which he wasn't awarded because the donor did not wish a Jew to receive it.[142] Another respondent questioned whether her failure to be a counselor in a dorm was due to her Judaism:

> I had applied to be a counselor for my junior year, and was refused by the housemother. For some reason, I wondered whether the fact that I was Jewish had anything to do with the refusal. (I had had one Jewish counselor when I was a freshman; she had been selected by someone else.) I do not recall any Jewish counselors being selected that year I applied, but I do not know this as a fact.[143]

Only a few students experienced anti-Semitism from professors. One mentioned a conservatory professor but said that it was just a strong feeling which came through both in the classroom and in conferences. Another respondent had a zoology professor who

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[140]15. She didn't leave and noted that she never had another experience such as that at Oberlin.

[141]271

[142]21, 20. The later respondent did give the name of the scholarship but for the purposes of this paper the name is not important.

[143]207

"wouldn't recommend me for med school -- he didn't like women/Jews -- I said to him he was a fool!" Another wrote that he had a professor who made very anti-Semitic remarks, although the professor was becoming senile and died shortly thereafter. Finally, one respondent commented, "I was told in [a] religion course that Jews were humorless, aggressive people."[144]

A number of Jewish students who were sensitive to the discriminatory experiences also noted positive experiences in the classroom. For the most part, they mentioned either receiving positive feedback on papers dealing with Jewish topics or professors who were aware of and discussed Jewish issues.

When it came to the issue of a Jewish community most of the respondents did not feel uncomfortable with the absence of one. Many said it wasn't needed. "[There wasn't one] probably because there were not that many Jews and I didn't feel an atmosphere of anti-Semitism so the need to be with other Jews was not urgent." However, although no overt community some still sensed a subtle underlying connection between the Jewish students. According to one respondent, "There was a feeling of commonality and recognition among most of us!"[145]

No specifically Jewish activities existed at Oberlin because like the Jewish students before them, the respondents in this period generally felt accepted and included. The social life was not particularly different from that of non-Jews although two respondents mentioned a missionary or Protestant atmosphere to the

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[144]271, 47, 35, 50
[145]275, 213

school.[146] Another said, "Most of the social life centered around the Christian 'Y'. As a Jew I was eager to learn more about Protestants. The 'Y' really was non-sectarian. I did feel that the Catholics were singled out by the Protestants and regarded differently and the Jews were ignored and didn't draw attention to themselves."[147]

Of the few respondents who said there were Jewish activities most could not recall any one organization and thought that if the Jewish students did gather it was infrequent and unimportant to their daily life.[148] Only 9% said they were involved in Jewish activities, mostly connected to religious services. One student organized a Friday evening service when he attended from 1943 to 1944[149] and another established a student temple.

> I with 3 other male students formed the 1st Oberlin Reformed Temple. We had services in the Theological Seminary Chapel. Used a Jewish Chaplains Flag -- Star of David -- at the alter. I used a service -- assisted by Rabbi Hillel Silver, Cleveland. Our Rabbi came from Elyria. I conducted a choir -- substantial group -- services continued after I graduated [1948].[150]

For High Holy Days, a majority of the respondents said there were no accommodations made but less than a quarter missed a class for any holiday. A number of respondents said they didn't observe.[151]

Daily interaction with non-Jewish students occurred mostly without problems. A number of students, though, began noting with

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[146] 23, 245
[147] 31
[148] 42, 94
[149] 117
[150] 76
[151] 21.3% missed, 14.6% said they didn't observe. From the comments it's more than likely that many other respondents didn't observe.

some regularity that part of the problem at Oberlin was the scarcity of Jewish students on campus and many felt cheated by this. Some did not have close Jewish friends and, as one student responded, "This was not out of choice . . . there were so few Jewish students on campus at that time . . . at least to my knowledge. It would have been good to have had a few Jewish friends."[152] A number also reiterated that they didn't choose friends based on religion.

Dating became increasingly complicated because of the war and, at the same time, an increasing desire by some of the respondents to date only Jewish students. "I would have liked to have dated Jewish boys, but the[re] were very few of them at Oberlin in 1945-1946."[153] And some of the Jewish students who did date non-Jews encountered rejection when their religious identity was learned. "I was dating a young man, classmate, until I went home for Passover -- when he found out I was Jewish he stopped asking me out." Another woman was told by the man she loved that he would never marry her because he couldn't return to his small Illinois hometown with a Jewish wife.[154]

Roommate assignments continued to favor the policy mentioned earlier. Interestingly, although only 16.9% of the respondents noted that their first roommate was Jewish, 66% of these students were from New York. Again, some of the respondents made rather pointed comments.

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[152] 219

[153] 275

[154] 184, 28. Both of these incidents were cited by the respondents as experiences of social discrimination which I will discuss shortly.

> My first semester roommate was Jewish. The College assigned the first semester roommates!! Aside from us both being Jewish we had nothing else in common. She was athletic, a math major, early to bed, early riser, popular music. I had exactly the opposite interests: read late at night, literature major, classical music, wanted to sleep, not exercise at 6:00 AM!! The College never asked us our interests, put us together by religion.[155]

By far the highest number out of all the groups of respondents, 23.6%, mentioned experiencing some form of social discrimination. Two factors seem to be involved. First, immigration laws were renewed restricting the number of Jews who could enter the United States; clearly Oberlin could not remain entirely protected from such sentiment. Second, the respondents, indicative of the time period, seemed increasingly sensitive to subtle yet hostile actions directed against them.

A number of respondents encountered students who were ignorant. "One girl said I was the first Jewish girl she knew -- had thought Jews had horns -- I thought she was nuts." Others had more hostile remarks directed their way. "My roommate was asked . . . how she tolerated living with a Jewish student." Another wrote, "One of my room-mates in a fight remarked: 'maybe we really should have Hitler here!!' or similar words. That was cause for a long term of ill-feeling. We split up after that semester. I think, now, in retrospect, that he was anti-Semitic, and still is."[156] One first-year student mentioned that he almost got into a fist fight and another

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[155] 275

[156] 47, 119, 36

said he was hit by a student from across the hall; both incidents occurred because they were Jewish.[157]

One respondent recalled being friendly with some people until they found out she was Jewish; she noted, however, that they were the exception, not the rule. "[There were] very minor instance of prejudicial remarks," wrote another respondent, "but this was period of Hitler so anti-Semitic attitudes were discouraged throughout USA." Another, though, made the following assessment of her Jewish experience at Oberlin: "I was considered an outsider in spirit and matters."[158]

Other respondents faulted Oberlin for not going far enough to address the affects of the Holocaust. "[There was] no acknowledgement of contemporary disaster visited on European Jewry." Another wrote, "Considering the time, I fault Oberlin (now) for not having raised the consciousness of its relatively few Jewish students. . . . WWII was in progress, Jews were being slaughtered in Europe and Oberlin seemed absolutely isolated from all that." And another described experiencing isolation, "I often felt very alone in my Jewishness and the lack of mention alone of anything Jewish -- historical biographical, traditional -- hurt. It was as though singular care was taken NOT to mention Judaism so as not to be accused of prejudice."[159]

Overall the general experience for Jewish students from 1940 to 1945 seems to suggest that although Oberlin was not any worse,

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[157]45, 94
[158]50, 41, 35
[159]230, 280, 30

and sometimes it was better than other places in the country, many Jews felt invisible; those who might have desired a more Jewish communal identity could not find one at Oberlin.

> If religion was important to a Jewish student in the years I attended, Oberlin was not the place to be. It was definitely a Christian School. There was a Christian seminary, 10 churches in a town of 5000 population and no synagogues or any indices of Jewish life. To me coming from N.Y.C., with its heavy Jewish population, this was interesting because so difference from my experience. There were times, though, when I longed to be with someone from my own background and cultural outlook. Sometimes I did a little educating of people who had never met a Jew before.

Many Jewish students cited no negative experiences at Oberlin related to their Judaism. As one respondent wrote, "I felt completely at ease and accepted on all levels of college and campus life. The best years of my life were spent in Oberlin College." Another said, "There were fraternities and sororities in our high school which discriminated against Jews -- none were admitted. Therefore, the atmosphere at Oberlin was refreshing to me and I did not have the need for religious life at a synagogue."[160]

As one respondent concluded.

> I feel that I flowed freely into and out of other groupings at will. I don't want to be read as saying that everyone in the administration, faculty and student body of Oberlin was indifferent to Jewishness, but I am reflecting my assessment that those who might have harbored negative feelings either successfully concealed them or were isolated from those areas in which I spent my years at Oberlin.[161]

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[160] 18, 271
[161] 15

SECTION 9
GROUP C (1946-1951)

Jewish students, near the end of World War II and immediately thereafter, were increasingly sensitive to Jewish issues, although they were not necessarily interested in expressing their Judaism through religious practice. Instead, they were concerned with maintaining a positive Jewish identity. The majority of the respondents cited few or no problems during their time at Oberlin although a growing number questioned the school's attitude towards and sensitivity to its Jewish students.

During the period representing Group C, approximately 191 Jews attended Oberlin; 92 respondents represent 48.1% of the Oberlin Jewish population. Increasingly, students came from Conservative backgrounds with less from Reform and Orthodox upbringings; at the same time more students said that they had no specifically Jewish upbringing.[162] There seemed to be both a pull toward traditional practice as well as one toward non-religious, although not necessarily non-cultural, identification.

Geographic representation continued to expand and the Jewish students came from over seventeen states. New York maintained its high representation and while the numbers from Illinois increased, the number from Ohio continued to decrease.[163] 78.3% of the respondents attended the College.[164]

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[162]Over 40% of the respondents noted observing or participating in specific Jewish traditions such as Confirmation, Bar or Bat'Mitvah, attending religious school or synagogue. Over 21% said they had no religious upbringing but a strong sense of Jewish identity.

[163]53.3% of the population came from New York, 5.4% from Ohio and 9.8% from Illinois. Interestingly, no student in Group B came from Illinois.

[164]16.3 attended the Conservatory, 2.2% were graduate students and 2.2% were double degree.

Increasingly, students chose to attend Oberlin for its academic excellence. Those citing the lack of fraternities and sororities also rose.[165] Respondents frequently mentioned other factors[166] but the most interesting trend was the striking drop in the number who mentioned they were awarded a scholarship.[167] The reason for this trend is difficult to determine; it could be related to the G.I. Bill for returning veterans, a decrease in the number applying for scholarships, or the overall number receiving them.

None of the students who departed before graduating cited Judaism as a factor, but a number cited it as a factor in their reason for attending. One mentioned that Oberlin was particularly bias-free, another noted that there was an active Jewish group and one wrote that Oberlin was attractive because there were so few Jewish students enrolled.[168] As one student explained, "[The] absence of fraternities, exclusive organizations or any kind of ghettoization was a major consideration. I had visited another college where I was appalled at the exclusion and a compulsory Jewish clique."[169]

Oberlin continued to be a place where Jewish students didn't hide their religious identity; the majority of the respondents said their classmates knew they were Jewish although religion was not an issue. Some of the Jewish students were aware of other Jewish

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[165]Over 65% cited academic and 17.4% cited no fraternities or sororities.

[166]Particularly the school's distance from home, size, and political activism. However, only three said they were alumni children, a rather tiny number for a school which traditionally attracted a good number of alumni children.

[167]In Group B, 18.0% of the respondents said they attended because they were awarded a scholarship, in this Group it was only 5.4% of the respondents.

[168]67, 79, 105

[169]113

students even if they didn't seek to establish friendships. "[I] didn't pay much attention to their religion; but I was always conscious of which students were Jewish." One student mentioned that she "publicized [her Judaism] to avoid potential problems."[170]

A growing number of respondents mentioned that they had close Jewish friends[171] while still over 55% said they didn't, many because of the scarcity of Jewish students on campus. "All of my friends were not Jewish at Oberlin -- a matter of logistics -- just about everyone was Protestant. . . . To my knowledge -- I was aware of only one other Jewish student in my freshman class."[172]

Dating increasingly presented a problem for Jewish students. A substantial number of respondents said they dated, or would have like to have dated, Jewish students. As one respondent put it, "This played a bigger 'desire' role as I wanted to date Jewish girls, but supply and demand dictated dating outside of Jewish students."[173]

A growing minority of the Jewish students identified a Jewish community on campus.[174] The awareness, in part, could be related to the increasing numbers of Jewish students on campus (increasing in numbers, but not in the percentage of the entire student body). In 1939 there were only 81 Jews on campus, by 1949 the number had more than doubled to 169.

Some interesting contradictions arose when students described the Jewish community. One reporting no Jewish community said,

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[170] 205, 86

[171] 40.2%.

[172] 82

[173] 108

[174] 13% said there was a Jewish community, 45% said there wasn't and 37% didn't know. In Group B only 4.5% believed there was.

"Jewish students were friendly, identifiable, but not a cohesive fellowship or affinity group, as I recall," while another who said there was a Jewish community commented, "Some of us tried to band together. Most tried to avoid contact. I felt alone and lost."[175]

A different perspective came from this respondent.

> Many of my Jewish friends stayed within a clique in a clannish manner which made them feel comfortable. I chose to explore what to me was a different and exciting new environment, very different from where I came from in NYC. I tried to understand as much as possible the Christian Middle Western world which I found myself in and . . . the experience resulted in reinforcing my Jewishness.[176]

Yet, according to a few students "it was not fashionable to be 'clannish.'" Another concurred: "Jewish students did not form cliques. I may be reflecting a minority, personal view but I do not remember students' religion being important one way or the other."[177]

In this period students became increasingly aware of activities specifically for Jewish students.[178] A growing number began looking for ways to express their Jewish identity. A number of organizational options were considered, yet the majority of the Jewish students rejected the formation of a Hillel. As one respondent explained, "The feeling at the time was that we were totally accepted and included in all activities -- there was no need for Hillel."[179] Another student, who returned to Oberlin after the war recalled:

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[175]200, 61

[176]71

[177]185, 218

[178]Over 38% recalled some form of Jewish activity on campus and 19.6% were involved -- only 13% thought there was a Jewish community.

[179]83

> [B]y my return in 1946, there was a move by some Jewish students to organize -- some wanted to go the Hillel organization route -- others of us felt this route would create Jewish/non-Jewish frictions where they had not hitherto existed -- so we pushed an Oberlin College student Jewish organization for religious (not social) purposes. Our view carried the day. . .[180]

To satisfy this religious need without separating themselves from the rest of the student body a number of students founded the Oberlin Jewish Congregation in 1948.[181] They held Sunday services (there were classes on Saturday), which included a student choir.

As a number of respondents pointed out, this group was formed by the students rather than by the administration; students felt autonomous and proud of their achievement. Several mentioned the encouragement provided by President Stevenson. He had them to his home for tea which included discussions with a number of rabbis from nearby towns. "In 1948 President William Stevenson and Rabbi A. H. Silver chided the Jewish student group for not holding religious services on campus. Thus was born the Oberlin Jewish Congregation which had services in Fairchild Chapel with and without visiting rabbis." One student became involved in the

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[180]39

[181]In a 1949-1950 report from the Religious Interest Committee, a description of the Oberlin Jewish Congregation appeared as follows. "[The Oberlin Jewish Congregation] conducts religious services on the first and third Sunday mornings each month at Fairchild Chapel. Services are sometimes led by visiting clergymen and other times by the students. An Elyria rabbi visits the group frequently and other rabbis from Lorain and Cleveland come occasionally. The Congregation has a student-directed choir of twelve voices. Approximately fifty students are active and as many as seventy have attended services. On days of particular importance in the Jewish Year the congregation arranges transportation for students to temples and synagogues in Elyria, Lorain and Cleveland. The local group has no connection with any intercollegiate Jewish organization." From, "A Report on Student Religious Organizations, 1949-50" in folder, "Religious Interest Committee II, 1907-1968," Office of the Secretary, Box 150, OCA.

monthly and High Holy Day services "because in my freshman year orientation week overlapped with Yom Kippur and nothing was available to Jewish students."[182]

Not all of the Jewish students thought the creation of the Jewish Congregation was positive. One respondent reported:

> I was well aware that there were many Christian clubs and organizations on campus -- so many -- compared to one small token (it seemed to me) Jewish group, consisting of 'weirdos' (what they would now call 'nerds'). I had no interest in belonging to it; in fact, I felt embarrassed by them. I didn't want to be identified with them -- they were too Jewish, too different. Even though I can't say there was any overt anti-Semitism, the fact that Oberlin established culture was so definitely Christian made me feel like an outsider. During my freshman year, I had some Jewish friends who transferred out -- I think for the reason that they just didn't feel like they belonged.[183]

The post World War II period produced conflicting emotions for the Jewish students. Some felt the need to conform and fit in while, at the same time, they felt a sense of loss because they weren't included in the mainstream culture. Despite the obstacles presented a few Jewish students did attempt to create some type of Jewish community.

An interesting juxtaposition occurred: some Jews felt more comfortable in asserting their Jewish identity while others were wary of being too visible, of being perceived as different or "weird." The Jewish students sensed the threat of a backlash if they spoke too loudly. For some the need for a Jewish community prevailed over their fears of ostracization, although those who did organize were

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[182]250, 129, 257
[183]254

the work when he returned; and another said that students weren't allowed to cut class.[186]

Less than 15% of the respondents mentioned that accommodations were made for Jewish students to celebrate the religious holidays.[187] Most comments were negative: "[observing holidays] certainly wasn't encouraged. No suggestions or arrangements were posted to help us attend services in Elyria or Cleveland or have Jewish home hospitality. I don't remember matzos for Passover either." Another commented on the lack of sensitivity by the administration. "I just can't remember; chances are I stayed home on those days sometimes but not always, i.e. there was some insensitivity shown on the part of the school in these matters -- there should have been a definite policy whereby Jews could observe their holidays and make up the work." One student mentioned campus services but emphasized the need to keep them short in order to work around the College schedule. "High Holiday Services which lasted only an hour or thereabouts. . . [were] a make shift service which we scheduled so as not to interfere with classes!!"[188]

Yet many respondents said they didn't celebrate and only a few said they missed a class or exam for religious reasons.[189] "There were very few observant Jews on campus. Our needs were met informally and sympathetically."[190] Although only a minority wanted to celebrate, Jewish students organized for the first time in

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[186]227, 225, 75 respectively
[187]14.1%.
[188]239, 60, 67
[189]Only 17.4% said they missed a class, exam or paper.
[190]129

the late 1940s to satisfy their religious needs.[191] In addition, a number of respondents said they had no difficulty in making individual arrangements.

For the first time in this period some respondents, mainly from the East, mentioned a new concern, a sense of feeling different in the social world of Oberlin. "There were a number of Jews, but we seemed to be exotics. . . . The Jewish students were individuals. Not much was made of their Jewishness by them or by the others. However, underneath, one had the feeling that we, as individuals, were slightly apart, considered different." Another student wrote, "I did feel a little 'different' at WASPY Oberlin but being a New Yorker had as much to do with it as being Jewish." And another, who felt this only a bit, said, "[the social life for Jews was] completely comfortable, integrated, non-discriminatory but perhaps [non-Jews were] somewhat unfamiliar to New York/Long Island Jews who were not raised on tuna casserole, cucumber sandwiches (crusts cut off), and weak beer." Yet for some this affected their experiences. One student transferred out after a year because "the whole school was so Middle Western, white, and bland, and self-righteous, I couldn't handle it. . . . Uptight white bread and mayonnaise mentality."[192] This student came from the East Coast, as did the majority of Oberlin's Jewish population; not surprisingly Ohio caused a culture shock for many who had grown up in a completely different environment.

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[191]This does not deny the existence of the Menorah Society; however it was not organized for religious purposes but for cultural and literary purposes.

[192]268, 55, 197, 57

Others saw this time period as the most important factor related to the social experience. "This was immediately after WWII and the nationwide feelings of equality and fellowship were added to Oberlin's traditional liberal values. In such a climate, fragmentation would have been unpopular and impossible."[193] All of these perspectives combined probably give an accurate picture of the social life for Jews at Oberlin: a bit strained for Jewish students but, overall, inclusive.

At the same time that there was an increasing awareness of a rather fragmented Jewish community there was a decrease in the total number of discriminatory incidents.[194] Interestingly the number of reported incidents of social discrimination decreased while the number of academic discrimination increased.[195] Institutional discrimination remained the same and no incidents of anti-Semitic views expressed in the classroom were reported.

No particular pattern to the discriminatory incidents emerged although the perpetrators were, at best, insensitive to Jews and at worst, hostile to them. One respondent explained, "No 'incidents', per se, that I can recall -- however a number of subtle aspects of behavior amongst some students, that, in retrospect, could only have been evidence of anti-Semitic contempt." Another remarked "No

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[193] 129

[194] 30% in Group B cited some form of discrimination, 23% in this Group did.

[195] In Group B the number of social discriminatory incidents was 23.6%, in Group C it was 16.3%. For academic discrimination, Group B reported 3.4% occurrences, Group C reported 6.5%. However, two of the incidents cited as academic seem more appropriate as institutional. They will be discussed shortly (see footnote 200).

overt anti-Semitism but we N.Y. Jews were considered a breed apart."[196]

Similar to the earlier groups, most of the respondents experienced discrimination either on dates or from roommates. One student said "[I] Recall[ed] hearing that the parents of a non-Jewish boy I was dating objected to my Jewish background." Others were called names such as "kike", and one student encountered hostile behavior when he tried to join the Republican party. "[I was asked] why a guy like me wanted to join. . . . They were right, and I didn't join." Although most of the respondents said that these incidents were minor, for one it had a lasting impact. "Around Easter. There was a dorm get together. People were in a prayerful mood. They said the Jews killed Jesus. I tried to reason with the girls . . . talked about Pontius Pilate. They fingered me as a 'God Killer.' I've never forgotten the incident. It changed everything."[197]

Some of the incidents, reported by students, of academic discrimination were blatant. As one respondent recalled, "I clearly remember being with a small group of musicians in Mr. [ ]'s . . . car and we were all chatting. He made the remark of being in Mexico on vacation and 'Jewing them down'. That was the only anti-Jewish sentiment I hear[d] in four years!" Another felt she was excluded because of her Judaism. "Now that I think about it, I <u>was</u> discriminated against because I was Jewish by a very prominent professor -- had to do with woodwind quintet -- I was excluded from the quintet -- yet my friend [ ] (now deceased) played piano in it.

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[196]82, 225
[197]183, 52, 61

We discussed this frequently -- as to whether it was known that she was Jewish." And another student "would have appreciated . . . some recognition that we even existed -- you'd never have known that there were Jews, for example, in my art history classes -- all was Christian iconography."[198]

The students who were organizing religious services for the first time encountered some reaction to their efforts.[199] One student who helped start the Oberlin Congregation ran into problems with the "condescending attitude of people in YMCA and admissions when I tried to get names of Jewish students to invite to Oberlin Jewish Congregation."[200] Another student encountered a dean who "refused to allow us to serve wine at Seder because she 'knew it was traditional to get drunk.' I was too naive and non-assertive to argue. . . . We ended up with grape juice."[201]

A handful of respondents cited incidents of institutional discrimination.[202] One mentioned a level of "patronizing condescending and arrogant contempt with which I was treated by certain college administrators -- which in retrospect probably contained an element of anti-Semitism." Another speculated that she was probably treated differently when she was placed on a waiting list for admissions. "Two years earlier my brother was denied

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[198]262, 70, 199

[199]Although cited as academic discrimination both of these experiences might have been more appropriately cited under institutional insensitivity.

[200]257

[201]264

[202]5.4% of the respondents.

admission to another school because their 'Jewish quota' was filled."[203]

Not all anti-Semitic or discriminatory behavior was tolerated by the community, at least when it was recognized as such. "The freshman housemother was a rather bigoted person, but the students spoke up strongly whenever she made comments about any minority."[204]

Group C represented a Jewish population much more sensitized than previous generations and this is particularly clear when over 33% of the respondents said the College was insensitive to the needs of its Jewish students.[205] The majority of the respondents cited chapel and doxology: "Chapels, in at least 50-75% of the cases, were non-denominational. . . . Religious chapels made me uncomfortable at times, but not enough to object formally. It was a good idea to have a weekly all-college meeting."[206]

One student recalled an incident illustrating that some Jewish students felt what appeared to be a new freedom to express their displeasure at being excluded.

> In about 1949 or 1950 a group of Jewish students objected to compulsory assembly on religious grounds. It seems guest speakers on occasion would mention God or Christ, and there may have been a hymn or two sung. . . . After a rather heated protest which involved leaflets, letters to the paper, (demonstrations??) etc., the furor ended when President

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[203]82, 205

[204]81

[205]Only 25.8% of Group B said this.

[206]200. Another said, "Chapel was very defin[i]tely Christian" (264) while another found it inoffensive, "Our chapel attendance requirements did not involve religious programs. After the religious ceremonies in public school in NYC I though Oberlin had total religious freedom and no bias" (86).

> Stevenson announced that, while Oberlin welcomed Jews and others, it was after all a Christian School and those who were not in agreement could attend another college.[207]

This student, however, was not particularly bothered by chapel because he had transferred to Oberlin after having attended another institution where he encountered a good deal of anti-Semitism. He found Oberlin a place where he was "no longer self-conscious about being Jewish and could relate to Jew and gentile alike on an open basis."[208] However, intended or not, President Stevenson's comment may have been the type of expression that the respondents referred to when they said they did not always feel welcome at Oberlin.

There was a disturbingly pervasive Christian atmosphere at Oberlin which, according to one respondent, included Doxology. Another respondent said:

> "I remember that we were expected to sing the 'Doxology' (a hymn) before every Sunday dinner which ends. . . 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost". I sort of inaudibly mumbled the words when I got to that line. Underneath, I resented that the general policy for all of us was Christian.[209]

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[207]59. I could not locate material on this incident but time did not permit a thorough search.

[208]59

[209]254. A number of other respondents expressed similar sentiment. "I particularly resented the singing of 'the Doxology' at Sunday dinners" (49) and "Singing the doxology every single Sunday at the noon meal. Chapel attendance was required and I knew that wasn't my religion! The first time I ever saw a pork chop was at Oberlin. I'm sure Jesus Christ's name was invoked from time to time at places where I was required to be. I <u>knew</u> that I was at a church-backed school. . . Christianity (the 'do good' type) was in the air. [This made me] angry and sensing a coldness around me at those times" (262). Another student said, "The pervasiveness of 'Christian' atmosphere was such as to virtually exclude recognition of non-participants -- administrators and colleges seemed to just <u>assume</u> that <u>everyone</u> was Christian. I don't recall even a <u>mention</u> of other denominations or beliefs. I do not recall it bothering me much -- I knew what I was getting into" (82).

Yet not all students were bothered by the pervasive Christian emphasis.

> The school was predominantly a Christian student body with a Christian atmosphere to which I adjusted. It did not affect my beliefs or my sense of Jewishness. To the contrary, my experiences at Oberlin enhanced my Jewish beliefs as I understood more through study of comparative religions that I truly believed in Judaism.[210]

A number of other students did not find the school insensitive to Jewish students either: "Absolutely not. It encouraged/supported/assisted the <u>few</u> of us. I felt lost only because I[t] was so small as a group, but [I] <u>never</u> felt alienated because of my beliefs." "Food wasn't an issue," wrote another student, "except the scarcity of N.Y. type goodies. When my parents sent 'care' packages, I had a hard time keeping the food for myself -- non-Jews loved it."[211]

In addition, 10% of the respondents mentioned that there were positive Jewish views expressed in the classroom. Religion courses were cited most often: "I took Christianity and Modern Civilization from Dr. [ ], in the Theological School and also History of Living Religions -- we spent a lot of time on Judaism and it was taught positively." Another respondent, though, experienced the opposite in his required religion course. "We were required to take one course on religion. Altho[ugh] the 'Theological Seminary' was non-denominational, all courses were essentially in the Christian tradition. I took a course on [?] from which I learned a great deal,

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[210]71

[211]131, 197

but [I felt at the time that] it was an annoying waste of time . . . and of course the graders were religiously-oriented." Another student mentioned that there were "not even [positive Jewish views] in the Old Testament class I took -- the closest thing to Judaic studies offered then." And one respondent summed up his classroom experience this way: "It was as if we didn't exist."[212]

Overall, the perceptions of Oberlin were mixed. The majority of the Jewish population was comfortable at Oberlin; many were not interested in strongly identifying, at least religiously, as Jews. However, during this time period an increasing number expressed awareness of the limitations and drawbacks of Oberlin as it related to Jews. Although the College provided a rather open and friendly environment for its Jewish students, a minority also felt isolated, different or ignored by the larger community. While the community certainly did not reject them, it did not necessarily acknowledge their presence nor assist in making their experiences at Oberlin particularly Jewish. At Oberlin Jewish students were largely responsible for addressing the few needs they had.

Some of the concluding comments by the respondents illustrate Oberlin's limitations as well as its advantages. A few found Oberlin less than ideal. "The school was very Christian-oriented and Jews felt out of place. At that time I felt almost ashamed to be Jewish and few people knew I was. It was not a healthy atmosphere for Jews." Another student fulfilled his religious needs outside of Oberlin. "Denial and assimilation were the main characteristics of Jews I

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[212]90, 74, 205, 57

knew. There was some concern by some that the O.J.C. [Oberlin Jewish Congregation] would make Jews visible and embarrass them. There were no practicing Jews on faculty. I taught Sunday school in Elyria and got my Jewish contacts and support there." This was confirmed by another respondent who said, "the Jewish situation was ignored by the students. I felt a great need to conform . . . I really missed (in retrospect) any Jewish experience."[213]

A few students concluded that, overall, Oberlin was a rewarding yet unsuccessful experience.

> In the end Oberlin failed me in that the college did not provide an environment where I could enhance my Jewish identity. Yet Oberlin provided me with a keen intellectual environment, and enabled me to develop the skills needed for acquiring the thrill of knowledge, the joy of understanding -- which have stayed with me since these Oberlin days.[214]

Another drew a similar conclusion.

> During and since my time at Oberlin, I have responded on two levels to the idea of Oberlin: I'm proud to have been educated at a school so highly regarded by those knowledgeable about higher education; at the same time, I know down deep that I never felt an attachment to my school. I never felt 'at home' at Oberlin. I was a Jew from the East (N.J.), culturally worlds apart from the kids and environment at Oberlin, which was predominantly Christian and Midwestern. I really felt like an alien. I had some very close friends, both Jewish and non-Jewish, but outside of my immediate circle, the institution and the majority of people there were part of a culture foreign to me.[215]

For many, though, who did not particularly desire "Jewish experiences," the atmosphere at Oberlin was no different for them

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[213]49, 257, 87
[214]227
[215]254

than it was for the non-Jewish students. "To the best of my recollection," recalled one respondent, "life on campus was singularly denial of discrimination against minority groups. There was a strong desire from most students to feel part of one community."[216] Another said,

> I did not feel that Jewish students were discriminated against in any overt manner. . . . If anything, there was an atmosphere of assimilation of minorities, and of acceptance. At the time, there were enough Jewish students on campus to create an identifiable demand for collaboration or "community", but none was expressed. Jewish students were comfortable with campus life, and with its many social and extra-curricular activities.[217]

Oberlin was certainly not for every Jewish student and many who hoped to express their Jewish identity felt frustrated. On the other hand, Oberlin was a supportive and an unusually bias-free environment considering that fact that Jews faced overt and hostile discrimination from many sources in this country, including other academic institutions. As one student concluded,

> Looking back, I know it sounds Pollyannaish, but I cannot imagine a more accepting atmosphere than the Oberlin of the late 40s. All activities were open to everyone; I cannot remember even one instance of interaction with other students and faculty where I felt uncomfortable. Perhaps if I had had a religious upbringing, I might have felt differently -- but then I probably wouldn't have applied in the first place.[218]

Oberlin was a difficult place for Jewish students. Although Jews were attracted to the school because of its academic excellence as well as its reputation as a tolerant and safe place for Jews, many

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[216] 73
[217] 200
[218] 81

of the Jewish students felt frustrated when toleration often meant lack of recognition. Jewish students did not want to be singled out, nor did they want to be ignored to such a degree as to feel invisible. This was a transition time for both Oberlin and its Jewish students; both were trying to find a way to create the best environment for all.

SECTION 10
GROUP D (1952-1968)

Group D represents a rather small sampling of the Jewish population at Oberlin during 1952 to 1968. As the number of Jewish students began increasing[219] this affected their experiences. The majority of respondents who maintained a Jewish identity while at Oberlin had positive Jewish experiences. For the most part, however, the institution remained oblivious to the existence of Jewish students at Oberlin.

The make-up of this group is interesting. Almost a quarter of the respondents said their Jewish upbringing was more cultural than religious. Nearly half said their upbringing included some exposure to religious practice and over 50% came from a Reform

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[219]Appendix 3 shows that by 1953-54, the percentage of Jewish students at Oberlin was 10.3%, the year before it was 9.2% and before that, 1951-1952, it was 9.1%. These numbers were probably based on the registration cards which students filled out. I base this on the fact that listed on Appendix 3 are both "Reformed Jewish" and "Reformed Judaism." These are one and the same and probably came from information supplied by the students. In addition, in his letter to me Robert L. Jackson explains, "After 1949 arrangements were made to gather information at registration concerning a student's religious preference. This proved unsatisfactory, however, given the Oberlin student's irreverence for pro forma procedures. When students began to develop some very exotic religious preferences and to switch from one denomination to another each semester, the matter was dropped." Robert L. Jackson, March 1988.

background.[220] The comments from this group of respondents indicated that they were not, for the most part, religiously observant.

> Most of the Jewish students in my class came from the Liberal-Reform branch of Judaism and were not, by Orthodox standards, "practicing Jews" (Jews who kept the dietary laws or regularly attended religious services). In background and outlook, they were very similar to the bulk of Oberlin students, who came from Liberal-Secular Protestant tradition -- there were no social barriers between these two groups at all.[221]

Beyond Oberlin's excellent academic reputation, a growing numbers of respondents chose the school because of the political activism of the student body.[222] As one respondent explained,

> In the early and mid-Sixties America was a country at war externally and with itself. Oberlin was a focal point of intellectual and politicized campuses. We were all struggling to find peace and hope. Jews, Catholics and Protestants worked together to help make change possible. Being an American Jew felt very comfortable.[223]

Although it was a time period in the country when fraternities and sororities were removing discriminatory barriers, Oberlin still attracted Jewish students specifically because it didn't have either.[224]

The majority of the respondents did not experience Oberlin from a particularly Jewish perspective, although many commented

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[220] 30.2% had some form of Jewish education, 25.6% were Bar or Bat'mitzvahed, 32.6% attended synagogue, and 18.6% were confirmed. Overall, 46.5% cited at least one of these, another 13.9% said they had a cultural Jewish identity. 51.2% said they were from a Reform background, 23.3% Ethical, 16.3% Conservative and one student was from an Orthodox background. All of the respondents cited some form of Jewish upbringing or identification.

[221] 164

[222] 55.8% cited academic, 20.9% political activism. In addition, 20.9% cited size, 18.6% cited co-education, and 18.6% liberal arts education.

[223] 188

[224] 11.6% cited lack of fraternities or sororities as a factor in their choosing Oberlin.

that there was a sense of identification with other Jewish students. Further, unlike some of the earlier respondents who felt it necessary to submerge their Jewish identity, thus leaving them feeling isolated from their Judaism, these respondents were comfortable asserting their Jewish identity while at the same time not being particularly interested in religious observance. "Many Jewish students had a sense of their identity and shared it not in an organized way. It was an awareness of who was Jewish and little more."[225]

Part of this was explained by more than one respondent who wrote that a growing number of Jewish students at Oberlin clearly contributed to the security many of these respondents felt at the time. "[I] felt very comfortable [at Oberlin] -- enough Jewish kids that my religion never felt like an issue -- particularly since I was not very observant."[226]

Only a few variations appeared to the themes presented in the other groups. For the first time none of the respondents mentioned that there were too few Jews on campus which, in the past, had made establishing a Jewish identity, Jewish friends or dating other Jewish students difficult. Many respondents noted that they felt no different at Oberlin because of their Jewish identity. "The distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish students was non-existent in my day," said one respondent, "e.g. the president of the campus YMCA was Jewish!"[227]

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[225] 273
[226] 178
[227] 164 [1956-1960]

For most, the need to seek out particularly Jewish activities was not necessary. Some, particularly when they first entered Oberlin, did gravitate toward Hillel, the only Jewish organization on campus.

> Upon entering Oberlin I did feel a need to join Hillel in my freshman year because this was the first time I felt the feeling of being in a minority as a Jewish person. . . . I needed some sort of identity with my roots. Coming from a background where most of my friends were Jewish, I needed that particular bond that Hillel could give.[228]

Others perceived Hillel as too religious for them. "The only organization I remember that was Jewish-oriented was Hillel, and I felt it was a little too Orthodox for my taste. I can't think of any activities for Jews that weren't Hillel-sponsored, and then only religious services."[229]

A very small number of discriminatory incidents were reported by this population.[230] One respondent explained her experience,

> It would be wonderful if I could report that anti-Semitism was non-existent during my Oberlin years. While nothing was directed at me personally. . . there definitely were some remarks directed at my fellow Jewish students (behind their backs). For example, the student who told me I was nothing like that "typical Jew" ---- (the person's name); or someone else who said ---- was "such a Jew about money" and in the next breath saying "nothing personal against you, [ ]." . . . I feel the

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[228] 186

[229] 161

[230] Academic discrimination, 4.7% (2 people); anti-Semitism in the classroom, 2.3% (1 person); institutional discrimination, 0.0%; and social discrimination, 9.3% (4 people).

> atmosphere that seemed so warm and accepting was a good deal less so with remarks like these.[231]

Another respondent recalled what she deemed "a rather enlightening experience" which occurred at least 15 years after the Holocaust. "A 'boy' ceased dating me when he discovered I was Jewish, with the parting line, 'I think Hitler was right. The world would be a lot better place without any Jews.'"[232] Fortunately, from a comment made by another respondent, such incidents of blatant anti-Semitism seemed rare at Oberlin.

> Oberlin was so proud of its liberal traditions that overt anti-Semitism was very frowned on in the early 1950s. Also the post WWII atmosphere, awareness of the Holocaust made "decent" Americans less anti-Semitic than before. Some housemothers seemed anti-Semitic, some students in the Freshman dorms. . . . If I recall correctly though, it was the anti-Semitic students who didn't fit in, and tended to leave after Freshman or Sophomore year. I think most of the Jews did very well indeed.[233]

Oberlin still was perceived by over a quarter of the respondents as insensitive to the needs of its Jewish students.[234] Most of the respondents were not particularly bothered by this although a few expressed some frustration with having to attend chapel. One student didn't like the chapel requirement. "[I felt] like an outsider -- not wanting to do it but not wanting to offend or upset people." He also took his meals at one of the co-ops to avoid reciting the Doxology.[235]

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[231] 186
[232] 173
[233] 190
[234] 25.6% said the school was insensitive.
[235] 170

For the most part this small group felt no different than non-Jews while they attended Oberlin. "I really don't remember anything at Oberlin that made life different or difficult for Jewish students. Students didn't (openly) differentiate and the school didn't (openly) discriminate. To me, it wasn't an issue." And another respondent summed up the Jewish experience this way: "Jewish students were a minority, but a recognized one. While the College didn't go out of its way to accommodate Jews, it was certainly not hostile to them. Catholic students must have felt the same way. The prevailing ethic was Protestant and liberal."[236]

CONCLUSION

Oberlin College has experienced numerous changes since the early twentieth century. Some of the changes can be attributed to the changes in Oberlin's Jewish students. The Jewish students entering the College in the 1930s were not particularly interested in expressing their Jewish identity nor were they bothered by the institution's insensitivity towards the Jewish student body. This was a period of assimilation for Jews in the United States; many were recent immigrants and sought to establish themselves within the predominant Christian mainstream. This affected the attitudes of Jewish college students. They sought to establish themselves through educational opportunities which necessitated their abandoning many of the more traditional religious practices that their parents or grandparents observed.

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[236]171, 277

During World War II Oberlin's Jewish students became increasingly aware of their Jewish identity whether in a religious or non-religious form. There was a growing sense of security for Jews in the United States. These students were often second generation college graduates. A number of Oberlin's Jewish students expressed a sense of isolation while at Oberlin and frustration at the school's continued insensitivity and lack of recognition of a growing Jewish population. They were left to their own devices to carve a niche at Oberlin where they could feel comfortable as a member of the larger Oberlin community while establishing a Jewish community which addressed their particular needs. Initially only a few sought such expression and some felt decidedly uncomfortable about any overt expression of Judaism fearing that they still might be considered "different."

As the 1960s approached, many of Oberlin's religious traditions were abandoned. Although the majority of Jewish students who enrolled at Oberlin were not particularly interested in expressing their Judaism through religious practice, they were now more comfortable than in earlier decades to proclaim their Jewish identity. There was less fear of being "different" or considered an outsider. Clearly, from the comments of the respondents during this time, Oberlin was not free from creating a sense of isolation of or insensitivity towards its Jewish population. Yet the student movements of the 1960s affected Oberlin's campus as it did campuses across the country. Many Jewish students chose Oberlin because of the political and activist nature of its student body.

That the majority of Jewish students were not interested in religious observances does not preclude their strong identification with Judaism. As Jewish students at Oberlin, many sought means of strengthening or affirming their Jewish identity. For a few it meant creating a place where Jewish students could observe the Jewish holidays. For many it meant being drawn to other Jewish students who shared similar philosophies or backgrounds. And for others it meant a period of confusion at Oberlin where the majority seemed to ignore the existence of Jewish students and the institution maintained a detached insensitivity to its Jewish population.

As Oberlin enters the 1990s the last 25 years have meant further change for both the institution and the student body. The Jewish population has grown as has its efforts to establish a stronger Jewish community on campus. With a 1989 faculty vote to establish Yom Kippur as a holiday, the Jewish students have demanded and received more recognition from the institution. Many are still seeking means to address the historic insensitivity of the College. I leave the task of uncovering and documenting all of the changes of Oberlin and its Jewish population to the next researcher; it is certainly a project rich with possibilities and sources.

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APPENDIX 1

JEWISH STUDENTS IN OBERLIN COLLEGE

Year	Total Jewish Students in Oberlin College	Total Enrollment in Oberlin College (Excl. Summer S.)	Percent Jewish
1929-30	9	1676	.005
1930-31	15	1683	.008
1931-32	11	1666	.006
1932-33	16	1571	.010
1933-34	24	1672	.014
1934-35	38	1652	.023
1935-36	37	1703	.021
1936-37	42	1802	.023
1937-38	57	1838	.031
1938-39	81	1860	.0435
1939-40	66	1916	.0344
1940-41	103	1889	.0546
1941-42	115	1882	.0631
1942-43	126	1781	.0707
1943-44 (3 terms)	93	1417	.067
1944-45 (3 terms)	96	1441	.0666
1945-46 (3 terms)	103	1791	.0575
1946-47 (3 terms)	120	2399	.05
1947-48 (3 terms)	129	2399	.0537
1948-49	150	2258	.0664
1949-50 (1st [illegible])	169	2156	.0783

SOURCE: "Jewish Students at Oberlin, 1929-1951," Office of the Secretary, Box 155, Oberlin College Archives

[illegible] applying to Oberlin College, those accepted and percentages.

APPENDIX 2

	WOMEN			MEN			TOTAL		
	No.	J	%	No.	J	%	No.	J	%
Applic. Filed 1949-50	691	- 115	16.6	526	- 112	21.3	1217	- 227	18.6
Accepted	285	- 19	6.7	340	- 37	10.9	625	- 56	8.9
Applic. Filed 1948-49	765	- 130	16.9	607	- 148	24.3	1363	- 278	20.4
Accepted	262	- 21	8.0	331	- 40	12.1	593	- 61	10.3
Applic. Filed 1947-48	809	- 118	14.6	632	- 127	20.1	1441	- 245	17.0
Accepted	255	- 10	3.9	333	- 23	6.9	588	- 33	5.6
Applic. Filed 1946-47	847	- 146	17.2	590	- 111	18.8	1437	- 257	17.9
Accepted	204	- 2*	.9	241	- 10*	4.1	445	- 12*	2.7

* Since cards are no longer in Office, no accurate figure available.

SOURCE: Oberlin College Office of Admissions

October 27, 1949

APPENDIX 3
UNTITLED [JEWISH STUDENTS IN OBERLIN 1946-1954]

	1953-54	1952-53	1951-52	1950-51	1949-50	1948-49	1947-48	1946-47
Ethical Culture	2	5	---	5	4	5	4	3
Jewish	191	168	181	179	148	135	123	115
Reformed Jewish	6	5	---	---	---	1	---	---
Reformed Judaism	1	---	5	---	---	---	---	---
Total	200	178	186	184	152	141	127	118
Enrollment	1,946	1,941	2,052	2,117	2,155	2,201	2,219	2,180
%	10.3	9.2	9.1	8.7	7.1	6.4	5.7	5.4

November 19, 1953

SOURCE: Religious Preferences, 1928-65, Box 126, Office of the Secretary, Oberlin College Archives.

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIR YOUR JEWISH EXPERIEN S AT OBERLIN

INSTRUCTIONS: For YES, NO, DON'T KNOW questions, please circle the response which is applicable. For questions which ask you for more detail, please feel free to attach longer answers than the space provides.

Name _____ Maiden Name_____

Circle one: College Conservatory Double Degree Other: _____

Years Attended: _____ What was your home state: _____

If you graduated from Oberlin, what year: _____

Are you Jewish: YES NO

If NO, I would appreciate it if you filled out the questionnaire from your own perspective

If YES, did you consider yourself Jewish during the years you attended Oberlin:
YES NO DON'T KNOW

What was your Jewish background or upbringing:

Why did you choose Oberlin:

Did Judaism enter into your reason for attending Oberlin: YES NO DON'T KNOW
If YES, how:

If you did not graduate from Oberlin, why did you leave:

Did Judaism enter into your decision to leave: YES NO DON'T KNOW
If YES how:

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Did your classmates know you were Jewish: YES NO DON'T KNOW
Please comment:

Were your closest friends Jewish: YES NO DON'T KNOW
Please comment:

Did you have close friends who weren't Jewish: YES NO DON'T KNOW
Please comment:

APPENDIX 5

Percentage Jews represented at Oberlin from 1927 to 1951

From APPENDIX 1: "Jewish Students in Oberlin College [1929-1950]" I calculated the "gross" number of Jewish students attending by each Group:

Group A: 1929-39 = 396
Group B: 1940-45 = 533
Group C: 1946-51 = 752[1]

I asked the respondents to note how many years they attended Oberlin. I then caluculated the average that this represented for each Group:

Group A: 1929-39 = 3.73
Group B: 1940-45 = 3.01
Group C: 1946-51 = 3.51

To calculate the approximate "real" number (rather than the "gross" which is shown above) of Jews attending Oberlin for each Group it is necessary to take the average years of attendance given by the respondents and apply it to the "gross" number of Jews at Oberlin:

Group A: 1929-39 = 396 / 3.73 = 106
Group B: 1940-45 = 533 / 3.01 = 177
Group C: 1946-51 = 752 / 3.51 = 191

Next I calculated the number of respondents I had for each Group:

Group A: 1929-39 = 45
Group B: 1940-45 = 89
Group C: 1946-51 = 92

By comparing the "real" number of Jews attending Oberlin with the number of respondents I had I am able to determine the

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[1]To obtain a tally for this time period, I had to rely on a second list, Appendix 3 "untitled [Jewish Students in Oberlin 1946-1954]." The list "Jewish students in Oberlin College" (Appendix 1) only went to 1949-50 which precluded 1950-1951. During the four year period which these two lists overlapped the numbers were slightly different. For my calculations I relied on Appendix 1 and used only the 1950-1951 numbers from Appendix 3.

approximate percentage the respondents represent out of the entire Jewish population during each time period:

Group A: 1929-39 = 45/ 106 = 42.4%
Group B: 1940-45 = 89 / 177 = 50.2%
Group C: 1946-51 = 92 / 191 = 48.1%

In total, the percentage I have for this entire population is 47.6%

APPENDIX 6

Tabulations for Groups A, B, and C with Jewish percentages

	Number of Jews at Oberlin[1]	Number of Respondents	Estimated % out of Jewish Population at Oberlin[1]	Estimated % of Jews in Oberlin Student Body (averaged)[2]
GROUP A (1927-39)	106	45	42.4%	1.8%
GROUP B (1940-45)	177	89	50.2%	5.9%
GROUP C (1946-51)	191	92	48.1%	6.5%
TOTAL	474	226	46.8%	4.7%

[1]See Appendix 5 for explanation at how these numbers were determined
[2]See Appendix 1 and Appendix 3 for percentage listings